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WEST IRIAN EAST TIMOR AND INDONESIA

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MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP

The **MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP** is an international research and information unit registered in Britain as an educational trust under the Charities Act of 1960. Its principal aims are –

- To secure justice for minority or majority groups suffering discrimination, by investigating their situation and publicising the facts as widely as possible, to educate and alert public opinion throughout the world.
- To help prevent, through publicity about violations of human rights, such problems from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, when polarised, are very difficult to resolve; and
- To foster, by its research findings, international understanding of the factors which create prejudiced treatment and group tensions, thus helping to promote the growth of a world conscience regarding human rights.

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WEST IRIAN
EAST TIMOR
AND INDONESIA

By Dr. Keith Suter

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From the Universal Declaration
of Human Rights,
adopted by the General Assembly
of the United Nations
on 10th December 1948:

Article 1
All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2
Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

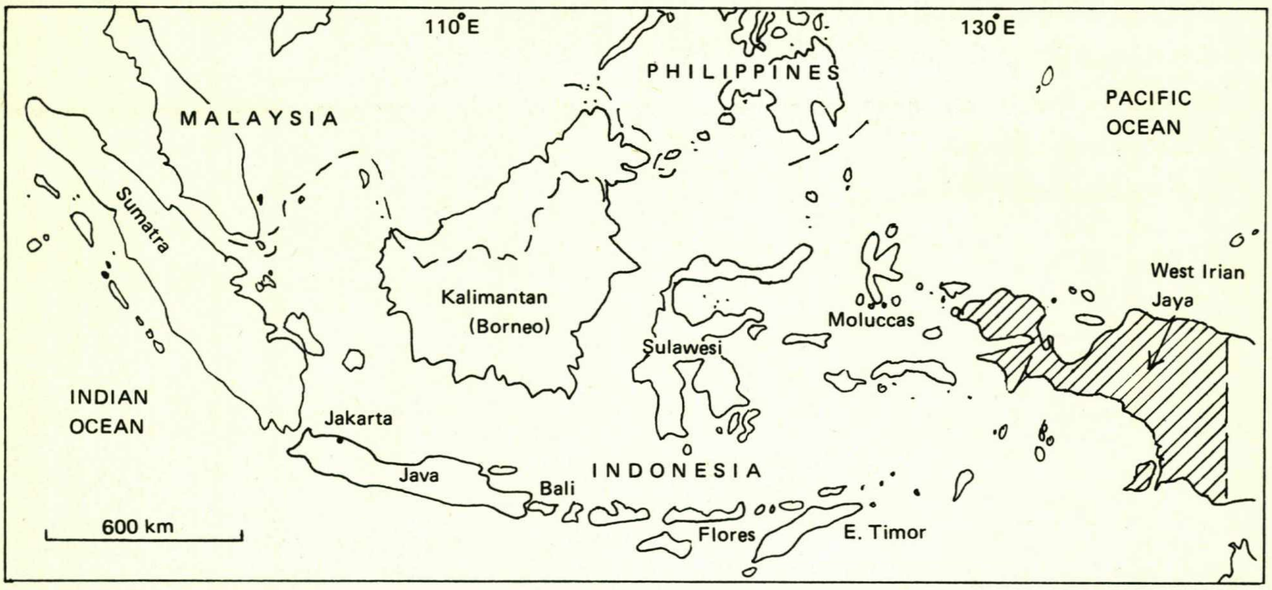
Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 10
Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 19
Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20
(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.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MALAYSIA
Sumatra
Kalimantan (Borneo)
Sulawesi
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Java
Bali
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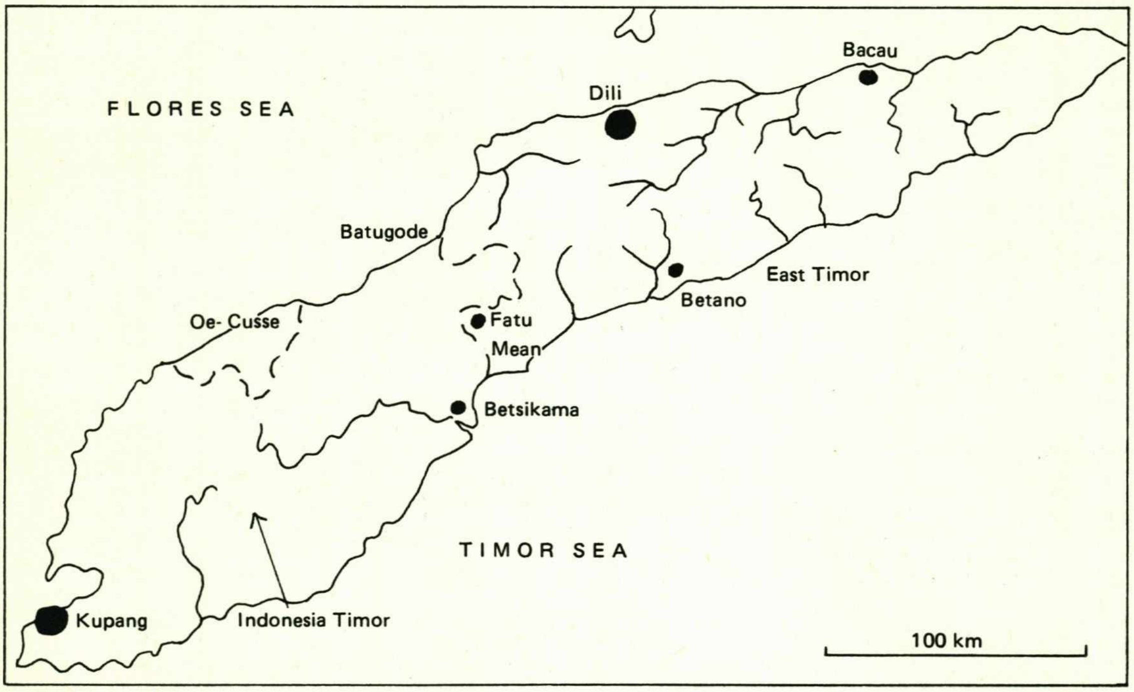
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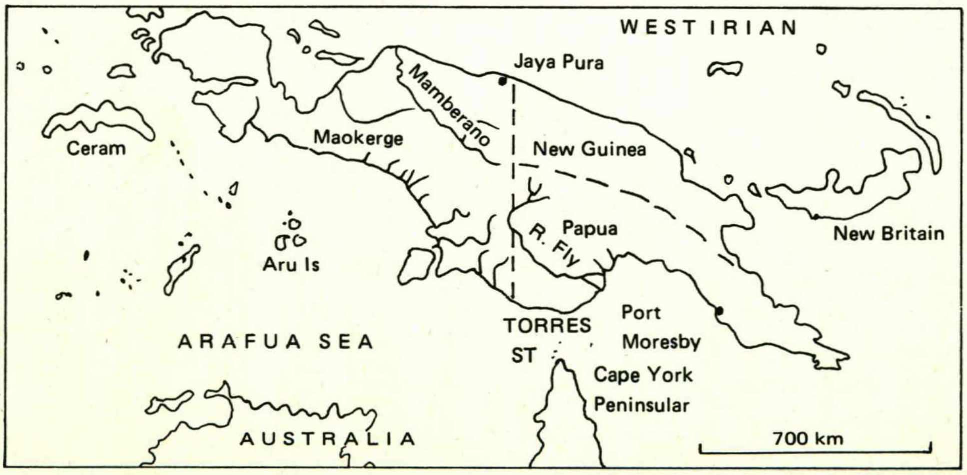
Bacau
Dili
Batugode
East Timor
Betano
Oe-Cusse
Fatu Mean
Betsikama
TIMOR SEA
Kupang
Indonesia Timor
100 km


WEST IRIAN
Jaya Pura
Mamberano
Ceram
Maokerge
New Guinea
Papua
R. Fly
New Britain
Aru Is
Port Moresby
ARAFUA SEA
TORRES ST
Cape York Peninsular
AUSTRALIA
700 km

FOREWORD

The 1975 Indonesian invasion of East Timor is one of the most brutal and blatant contraventions of international law since 1945. Although the conquest no longer receives even the little international media coverage it once had, the suffering of the East Timorese people remains as bad. Although there were some diplomatic remonstrations against the invasion, all governments have refused to adopt any forceful policy (such as economic sanctions) against Indonesia to coerce its withdrawal from East Timor.

The East Timor invasion was the second Indonesian territorial aggrandizement. It took over West Irian in 1963 and has since retained control over it. Despite the adverse reactions from some western governments, no government (not even that of the Netherlands) decided that the fate of the West Irianese was worth jeopardizing its relations with Indonesia.

This Report is largely concerned about these two land areas. It commences with a brief overview of their conqueror. As is emphasized in the text, the author does not necessarily recognize Indonesia's claim to the two areas. However, an examination of either or both areas, with particular regard to human rights, would be incomplete without an examination of their wider context – especially the way in which they became 'Indonesian minorities'. The Report uses the term 'areas' rather than 'provinces' (of Indonesia) as a further way in which to avoid the author's implicit acceptance of Indonesian conquest.

Events in both areas (especially East Timor) continue to move rapidly. It is inevitable that some features will be superseded by later developments. There is also the way in which the growing information on recent events enables us to obtain a clearer picture of what happened (again especially in East Timor since 1974). Finally, there are the different interpretations which observers accord the same information. In short, any examination of both areas is bound to elicit different reactions from readers. It is hoped that this study will be of use to people wishing to know more about the tragic events in both areas, as well as providing some insights into Indonesian motivations.

The writer accepted the invitation to do this Report because although he does not necessarily regard the West Irianese and East Timorese as Indonesian 'minorities', their plight conforms to the MRG's programme of work:

> (MRG) selects specific problems on which to focus attention, on the basis of criteria such as the severity of persecution or discrimination to which the victims of group prejudice are being subjected, the extent to which it is possible to obtain reliable information, and the prospect of securing an improvement in the treatment of the people concerned by making known the facts of their situation.

With the lack of mass media coverage to events in West Irian and East Timor, this Report may be of use in securing an improvement in the treatment of the people by making better known the facts of their plight.

The draft of this Report benefited from the comments made by Ms Carmel Budiardjo, Mr Robin Hanbury-Tenison, Ms Jill Jolliffe, Dr Ruth T. McVey, Professor Derek Roebuck, Ms Julie Southwood, Dr J.G. Taylor. The mistakes which remain are, of course, the writer's.

INTRODUCTION

> The cultural diversity of Indonesia is unique. No other country has so rich a spectrum of customs and peoples, each with its own special skills and knowledge of the particular environment in which it lives. The Bugis of southern Sulawesi were sailing and trading between Australia and Madagascar before the Portuguese rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Inshore fishermen visit each of Indonesia's 13,677 islands (by one count) as well as innumerable reefs, lagoons and rivers. Inland, over three hundred ethnic groups, speaking more than two hundred and fifty distinct languages and uncounted dialects, farm and hunt from the snow-capped mountains of Irian to the jungle swamps of Sumatra. Each has adapted, often over thousands of years, to its own particular circumstances and needs. Out of these has grown a colourful and fascinating variety of customs and traditions with their arts and crafts, abilities and techniques. Now, with the sudden influx of western products and ideas, these are all too often being degraded and forgotten as cheap, plastic goods flood in from Singapore and Hong Kong and development projects, which produce quick and short-term results and often leave a wilderness behind, supplant tried and tested systems.[1]

The first subject of this Report is Indonesia itself. To try to sum up in only a few thousand words the history and people of Indonesia is an ambitious task, fraught with risks of accusations that the author is too harsh or too sympathetic to particular persons or ideas, or is being superficial. This overview is necessary in order to put into perspective the other two subjects: West Irian[2] and East Timor. It is particularly important to acquire an appreciation of the extent of Indonesia's complex problems. While this writer has been dissatisfied with policies (especially on human rights) followed by the present Government, he has sympathy for anyone for trying to run Indonesia. This overview will also serve to raise the questions which run through the latter pages of the Report: given Indonesia's present problems, why does it try so hard to retain control over West Irian and East Timor?

Most of the Report deals with two areas claimed to be parts of Indonesia. The word 'claimed' is used because one area (East Timor) was recently annexed by force and only a few countries have recognized that annexation; the United Nations continues to oppose it. Meanwhile in West Irian some of its inhabitants have still not accepted Indonesian control over their affairs. This author has criticized the annexation of East Timor[3] and is unhappy about West Irian's present status. The compilation of this study within the context of an overall examination of Indonesia, does not, therefore, necessarily imply acceptance of Indonesia's claims to be the sole and rightful ruler of these two areas.

This Report has been undertaken because of the continuing crises in West Irian and East Timor, which have tended to be overshadowed by the foreign mass media's concern with Indonesia's various other problems. These two areas constitute Indonesia's greatest current problems with 'minorities'. The Report has been done, then, to shed some light on these two areas, especially because the provinces are the main focal points for violence within Indonesia. The areas are worth studying, however, for reasons other than their conflicts. West Irian constitutes about one-fifth of Indonesia's total land area and so is a considerable part of Indonesia. It is potentially wealthy in terms of natural resources, though whether this wealth will be realized in the next few decades remains uncertain.

Indonesia's determination to acquire both areas says a great deal about its overall approach to maintaining unity and the considerable lengths to which it will go to maintain national unity. The reactions by other nations to Indonesia's policies are also worth studying as indicators of international concern to maintain friendly relations with the turbulent giant, rather than be more concerned about the protection of human rights.

This Report covers matters over which there remain many disagreements, not only of interpretation but of fact. Indonesia does not receive the full examination from journalists that it is entitled to receive as a result of its size and potential influence and wealth. Foreign journalists are rarely based in Indonesia (and only then in its capital, Jakarta). Most journalists visit Indonesia as part of a caravan carrying their national leaders visiting Indonesia. Like their leaders, their stay is short and sandwiched usually between visits to other Asian nations. Meanwhile, Indonesia is unco-operative towards foreign journalists, whom it often views as trouble-makers out to damage its international image and ferment dissent within its nation. Academics, too, are viewed with suspicion and are barred from particular islands on which there is violence or something else which the Government wants to remain hidden from the world: West Irian and East Timor are good examples.

While every attempt is made, of course, to be an impartial commentator, Indonesia's affairs tend to generate scholarly disagreements; most notably the 1965 coup which has its own separate schools of thought. Additionally, it is very difficult to generalize about the people within a minority. They may often have only two points in common: their own ethnicity and persecution from without. Nonetheless, the persecution of the people in West Irian and East Timor justifies a study (however incomplete) of their plight in the hope of drawing further international attention to it.

INDONESIA

Introduction

Indonesia is the crippled giant of south-east Asia. Its potential strength has not been realized and probably will not be by the end of this century. Its post-independence history has been characterized by turbulence: turbulence openly expressed between 1949 and 1965; turbulence unashamedly repressed since 1965 but always threatening to burst open.

Indonesia has, however, suffered upheavals for much of its existence. Its propensity for fragmentation has facilitated its own exploitation; be it by Asian traders centuries ago or multinational corporations today. Its geographical location (astride some of the world's major sea routes) meant that Indonesia would figure in international economics, if not for its own extensive natural resources then simply because it was suitable as a staging post.

Indonesia's national motto is BHINNEKA TUNGGAL IKA which, in English, means Unity in Diversity. Its history and present major policies all have a bearing on or are influenced by the need to maintain national unity.

The minorities which form this Report's case studies are atypical of Indonesia's 'minorities'. On the one hand (as previously noted) their status as 'minorities' within Indonesia is still disputed. On the other hand, Indonesia is a nation of minorities. It just so happens that the present main areas of unrest are West Irian and East Timor. A Report compiled some years hence would doubtless give prominence to other Indonesian minorities. That is the nature of Indonesia's social structure. It seems that there is always at least one minority group at any one time dissatisfied with the rule from Jakarta. This part of the Report recalls briefly how Indonesia has developed into a nation of minorities, which are already the cause of unrest and could themselves later get the attention of a full Report: the Chinese and South Moluccans.

History

> When you read Indonesian history, you read world history. This country is a subtle blending of every culture that ever invaded it – Chinese, Indian, Melanesian, Portuguese, Polynesian, Arabian, English and Dutch. Indonesia's history is a story of wave after wave of migrations of peoples who either absorbed earlier arrivals, killed them off, or pushed them into less favourable regions such as deep forests, high mountains, or remote islands (where they are found to this day). This explains Indonesia's astounding ethnic diversity.[4]

Indonesia used to be a land bridge connecting New Guinea and Australia to the Asian mainland. The land bridge was destroyed by climatic and geological factors and it now forms the world's longest archipelago. Its east-west axis of about 3,200 miles is the equivalent of the distance between London and New York. The north-south axis is about 1,200 miles.

The 'missing link' theory was stimulated in 1891 when the fossil skull of an ape-man was discovered at Trinil in Central Java. He was alive and well in a warm climate at a time when most of Europe was still covered by ice. Ironically, his line seems to have died out because the present Indonesians are not descended from him. The giant dragon lizards did not die out and they still exist in Indonesia, maintaining a line going back millions of years.

Indonesia's pre-colonial history is still being researched and much remains unknown. Its historical development has been summed up:

> Four basic threads run through the history of the region and go far to explain its intricate ethnic and cultural patterns. Firstly, its location athwart the sea links between the two great Asian culture realms has made Indonesia a frontier for influences stemming from both China and India. Secondly, since prehistoric times the archipelago has experienced a stream of cultural intrusions, each impinging initially only on random locations and each modified in terms of existing patterns to yield an 'Indonesianized' version which spread later to other parts of this island world. Thirdly, a persistent feature of the multitude of islands, large and small, is the sharp contrast between the peoples of the coasts and those of the hilly interiors. Finally, the rivalry for political and commercial supremacy between the centrally located, agriculturally based realms of Java and the trade-oriented thalassocracies astride the Strait of Malacca has provided a continuing theme since the dawn of recorded history.[5]

The early Asian traders not only sought commerce but, in the early centuries AD, Hindu priests accompanying the traders sought converts. The Hindu and Buddhist cultures, especially on Sumatra and Java, were overcome by the spread of Islam from the 14th century onwards. This religion, too, came from traders chasing spice and carrying a new faith. Indonesia remains a major Islamic nation, with about 10 per cent of the world's Muslims, though it also contains some adherents of the earlier faiths.

The next religious overlay was Christianity, brought by the Portuguese. They had difficulty breaking the monopoly held by the traders and priests from China, India and Islamic countries. Instead of trying to supplant existing religious and commercial arrangements, the Portuguese encouraged trade and won converts in other parts of the island world. It is worth noting, then, that each invader up to this time did not create an 'Indonesian' nation as such but was content with having corners of it. While Indonesia is therefore an old nation in terms of its original inhabitants and impact on international economics, it is not old in terms of being a unified political whole.

The Dutch had more success in gaining political and economic control over what is now Indonesia. Much of the Netherlands' 19th century prosperity was derived from the Dutch East Indies. (The old international reputation of the 'Spice Islands'' wealth is illustrated by Christopher Colombus' 1492 voyage, in which he located the United States of America, which was motivated by a desire to find a quick route to the 'Spice Islands'.) An incentive to acquire greater physical control (rather than just trading relations) came from the spread of British influence in this region during the 19th century. Indeed, Britain controlled the land around Indonesia, stretching from India in the north-west round in a clockwise arc to the Australian colonies. With fears of invasion from without, the Dutch were even more troubled by colonial revolts. Java was most rebellious, especially in 1825-30 and 1894-9. The revolts continued during the twentieth century, with a major though abortive one in 1926. Some negotiations took place prior to World War II on a form of limited self-government but these did not come to fruition.

The extent of the weak support the Dutch enjoyed among the inhabitants was shown by the relative ease with which the Japanese were able to establish control over the country from December 1941 onwards. Many inhabitants saw the Japanese as liberators which, ironically, they turned out to be since the War marked the end of effective Dutch control. Independence was declared on 17 August 1945 by Indonesian nationalists. The Dutch did not recognize it and made futile if brutal efforts to regain control. The Dutch followed, not for the first time, a policy of divide and rule by encouraging the various components to fight one another. This campaign failed against the Indonesians but, more importantly, created international opposition. The Dutch spent on this campaign the equivalent of its American aid under the Marshall Plan and so the US Government questioned the sense of providing assistance to a nation which spent it only in fighting a colonial war. More significant was the US's anti-colonial stand, which had evolved out of its perceived role of winding up the old European empires and, ironically, its policy of increasing its own influence among developing countries to establish its own form of neo-colonialism. Meanwhile other European imperial nations had their own worries and had little interest in helping the Dutch. The Australian Labor Government was very sympathetic to Indonesian nationalist aspirations. While it is likely that a limited Dutch-Indonesian nationalists war would eventually have gone in favour of the nationalists, the war was not limited and the Dutch lost it more through international political opposition than military defeat.

On 27 December 1949 the Dutch transferred sovereignty to the republic of Indonesia – except for West Irian, which was left temporarily under Dutch control until its future could be decided. Sukarno, founder of the Indonesian Nationalist Party in 1927, and the leading figure in the struggle for independence, was the first president.

Sukarno's turbulent era remains the centre of controversy. He was one of the first of the Third World leaders and an initiator of the Third World bloc in international politics. Sukarno remains an enigmatic figure.[6] He had his own blend of marxism, nationalism, Islam and traditional Javanese concepts. He tried to forge a national identity for his country – though the foreign mass media were more interested in his taste for women. All Third World leaders have difficult tasks, but he had one of the hardest, given the country's fragmented nature, lack of precedents and the economic dislocation caused by colonialism. However, this is not the opportunity to examine his contribution to Indonesia or international relations generally, even less to trace the salient points of his leadership.

Six prominent Indonesian Army generals were killed by junior soldiers, led by Colonel Untung, on the night of 30 September/1 October 1965. The Army retaliated by killing leading members of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), the longest established communist party in Asia. This led to a wave of violence, in which thousands of people were killed – the estimates have varied between 80,000 and one million. The 1965 attempted coup and successful counter-coup remain the subject of controversy. Besides the number of people killed, the major questions are whether Sukarno was involved directly in the coup (as a way of establishing control over the Army) and what role did the PKI play. The present rulers take the view that they saved the nation from communist control. But it has also been argued that the PKI was doing so well with conventional methods that it had no need for violence. This period, one of the most important (if not the most important) in Indonesia's post-independence history remains too complicated to explain briefly to everyone's satisfaction and readers are referred to the literature which it has generated.[7] What is certain is that after 1 October 1965 Sukarno's control waned quickly. Though he had been proclaimed president for life, the new military rulers effectively removed him from power in 1966; he was formally deposed in March 1968 and died in June 1970. Nine years later, on the anniversary of his death, President Suharto dedicated an expensive mausoleum for the late President. This symbolized the resurgence in respect for him.

Sukarno's replacement, President Suharto, came to power on a wave of terror based on mass violations of human rights, especially of those alleged to be communist. Few other nations since 1945 have experienced such a brutal violation of human rights. By shifting his nation into a more overt anti-communist stance, Suharto hoped to obtain foreign aid from governments (especially the US) which were anti-communist, as well as enticing multinational corporations by promises of cheap, stable labour.

Indonesia Today

When Suharto and the armed forces ousted Sukarno from power in 1966, brought in a team of Western-educated technocrats to restore order and a degree of Western-style planning

> to the economy and reopened the country to foreign investment, it amounted to a repudiation of 20 years of Indonesian history. For the first time since Indonesia wrested its independence from the Dutch, the politics of nationalism were no longer in command. Instead, the priorities were economic pragmatism and an accommodation with the Western industrialized powers and especially Japan.
>
> In casting his lot with the major non-communist states, Suharto made a commitment that Sukarno had tried for two decades to avoid. He committed the nation to a dependence on trade and on aid from the major capitalist countries. He saw this as the best strategy to promote rapid economic development at home. But the move went against the dominant political themes in Indonesian history, and as such was a gamble. It opened Suharto's flanks to criticism from nationalists still suspicious of the motives of former imperial powers, to leftists who viewed the concept of liberal democracy as anathema and inherently exploitative, and to radical rightists who felt passionately, for reasons of culture and religion, that the influence of the West, with its secularism and corrupting materialism, must be staunchly resisted.[8]

President Suharto must rank as one of the world's most beleaguered leaders. He has presided over a country which, no matter how chaotic was his legacy, has failed to meet the goals he himself laid down, though the extent of the failure or success is hotly debated.[9] Indonesia remains the crippled giant of south-east Asia.

The initial results, however, were promising (at least on paper). Inflation was reduced (at one point under Sukarno it had gone to 600 per cent per year), GDP increased and exports flourished. The nation's infrastructure was greatly improved, with more schools, roads and hospitals than ever before. To what extent all Indonesians benefited from this economic programme, is difficult to evaluate. The new military elite and the foreign corporations have certainly done well. But it is likely that many people, especially those on the outer islands and in the slums in the cities on the inner islands, have not done well. Java, for example, has only seven per cent of the total Indonesian land area but has about 60 per cent of the people – of whom, in turn, about 75 per cent are landless. Indeed, Jakarta, on the island of Java, has been likened to Calcutta.[10] This once elegant Dutch city has been submerged under the weight of five million people, an expansion of 1000 per cent in half a century, living in appalling conditions but reluctant to live elsewhere.

An essential component of Suharto's 'New Order' was the importation of western-type economic approaches and goal-setting. (The people responsible have been called the 'Berkeley Mafia', since some of them acquired their social science training at the University of California at Berkeley.) The applicability of such thinking has been questioned, particularly in regard to its ability to supplant impenetrable cultural barriers and, even if this were possible, whether it would, in fact, be to the benefit of the Indonesian people. In short, the Indonesian leadership may have been following the wrong model for development[11] – if its goal was the creation of an equitable society.

This equivocation indicates a second reason for Indonesia's lack of progress: the inherent nature of its military dictatorship. Despite a veneer of western-type liberal democracy, Indonesia's ruling elite has been energetic in its attempts to, in effect, de-politicise the nation. It abhors public dissent. The government, acting on the policy that widespread public political expression could undermine national unity and security, has sought to curtail such expressions, no matter the number of people it puts behind bars. Its power is not absolute. It is under pressure to be more liberal from sections of its population (notably some intellectuals, journalists and students) as well as the US. Its success in restraining the flow of criticisms and suggestions has been manifested in its stale, if not wrong, economic policies. In short, the military dictatorship is mismanaging the country but has sufficient power to prevent an alternative government.

The biggest shock – which has been called the greatest peacetime disaster to hit any country in recent years – was Indonesia's own South Sea Bubble: the rise and fall of Pertamina, the national oil company. Pertamina was controlled by General Ibnu Sutowo and he was given wide discretion over the company's assets. He ran it aground by overextending it. This expansion coincided with fears of a run on Western banks and Pertamina was unable to meet a payment on a multimillion dollar loan – its debt was larger than the annual national budget. General Sutowo was sacked and Indonesia has been trying to make good the damage, which has involved the curtailment of capital expenditure projects.[12]

Third, the mismanagement is not absolute in the sense that although the majority of people have not benefited from Indonesia's economic growth, the ruling elite certainly has. The inflow of foreign aid (about US$6,000 million in the period 1973-78), the export of oil and other raw materials, and the use of Indonesia's cheap labour by multinational corporations, have all provided opportunities for corruption. The illicit transfer of such funds to the ruling elite and public servants may be as high as 30 per cent of total Indonesian foreign capital influx. Suharto has responded by initiating various anti-corruption operations, as well as calling for simpler life-styles. Both are fatuous, given the corruption and extravagent life-styles of the ruling elite itself.

Fourth, notwithstanding the recent success of Indonesia's family planning programme introduced in 1967 as a high priority matter (Sukarno himself was an opponent of family planning and so contributed to Suharto's population problems), Indonesia is still faced with a population crisis. It is the fifth most populous country in the world, with a population of about 135 million. The work force is estimated at 50 million. Of these, two million are unemployed and another nine million are underemployed. With an annual population increase of about two per cent (assuming that the population programmes continue) at least 1.3 million new jobs are required each year. Although five-year development programmes are introduced (Repelita 3 began in 1979), planning is difficult because of basic internal differences of opinion between those who advocate large-scale capital intensive projects and small scale labour intensive projects. Indonesia is not the only country, of course, to be faced with this dilemma but as it is one of the world's largest nations and heavily reliant upon Western and UN financial assistance, the implications of failure are much greater than, say, if the Pacific islands defaulted on their loans.

Of the estimated 135 million Indonesians, 90 million live on Java and Bali (the small island immediately to Java's east). These two islands, having a total area of little more than 35 per cent of Japan, have a population which is about 90 per cent that of Japan's. Java, in fact, has a population density rate of 1,442 persons per square mile – one of the world's highest. It is an ironic tragedy that despite all of Indonesia's land, so little of it is cultivated because so many people prefer to live on Java and Bali.

In 1977, Indonesia imported about one-third of the world's internationally traded rice. It is likely to retain its position as one of the world's major rice importers and will pay about 10 to 15 per cent of its export revenue for it. The 'green revolution' began well (but on a limited scale) in the 1960s, with three crops per year being produced as a result of better rice strains, irrigation and greater use of fertilizer. From the mid-1970s, however, the annual increase in rice production has been only one per cent. This has been blamed on bad weather, hard harvest conditions, soil erosion and mutation of the rice strains.

The obvious policy would be, as the Dutch thought, to transfer people from Java and Bali to other Indonesian islands. Transmigration programmes, though ambitious, have not resulted in large shifts in population. The government hopes to transfer 2,500,000 persons in the period 1979-84; only 300,000 were actually transferred in the previous five years. The resistance is motivated by the conservatism of the inhabitants to move away from a situation with which they are already familiar, particularly recalling the Government's record of general mismanagement being a bad omen, and the fear of the unknown future which the Government could be creating for them. Even more important perhaps are the facts that Java and Bali are fertile islands and the alternative islands are neither so fertile nor as suitable for the Javanese and Balinese agricultural methods. Moreover, there is the likelihood that the inhabitants of the other islands would resent their arrival both because of their coming from different parts of Indonesia and because they would be receiving preferential treatment (including possibly the allocation of land previously belonging to the original inhabitants). Finally, their presence in other islands may be viewed by locals as part of the Government's strategy of maintaining national unity by transferring evidently loyal persons to potentially dissident islands as a political counterweight to such aspirations.

Human Rights

One of the main points of this Report is the sheer magnitude of Indonesia's various problems, especially the need for national unity and the urgency of economic development. Indonesia's main claim to fame is its violations of human rights. This is what the foreign mass media regard as the most important; this writer believes that it has equally pressing problems which do not get international coverage. Its human rights record is dominated by the plight of its political prisoners, whose situation has been championed by Amnesty International.[13] Amnesty's work has had some success, with the release of some political prisoners to take place over a three-year programme. The first phase, in December 1977, saw the releases of 10,000 prisoners.[14]

The programme of release has not been without its critics.[15] It has been claimed that some of those released were very sick anyway and would not have lasted long in prison; the conditions for release have been stringent; and there is still a dispute over the total number of prisoners left (with the Government's estimate of 20,000 being considered 80,000 too few). In a recent statement, Amnesty itself expressed dissatisfaction with the scope and scale of the release programme.[16]

The majority of political prisoners are held, or have been held, because they are believed to be (rather than having been found guilty of being) members or supporters of the Communist Party. The Party is not itself an ethnic minority nor does it preach island separatism. The issue of political prisoners, no matter how serious and newsworthy, is not a substantive matter for this Report.

The issue does, however, relate to this Report. First, the overreaction of the Government to the Communist Party cannot now be explained merely as a fear of the 1965 attempted coup (in which the Party may not have been directly involved). Instead, the Government's anti-communist line is a mixture of its own distaste for communism and a bowing to pressure from the conservative Islamic population. Second, the 'communist menace' is a good rallying point for national unity and, like some other governments, it can use the 'menace' both as an explanation for its poor progress (which is blamed partly on the communists) and as a reason for the country to stick together.

It is a reflection of the Government's continued (if not increasing) unpopularity that recent additions to the ranks of political prisoners have been (non-communist) students and militant Muslims. In other words, despite the virtual disappearance of the 'communist menace', the Government still feels sufficiently threatened by other sources of criticism, that it needs to continue what remains, by international standards, one of the worst human rights records in the post-1945 world.

It is beyond the scope of this publication to examine the reasons behind, and the implementation, of this policy of repression. But two points should be made. First, the brutality with which East Timor was invaded and the continued harsh policies in East Timor (and to some extent in West Irian) are not mere aberrations. The military bureaucrats have approached the East Timor question with a history of human rights violations and carried over that brutal approach to the new task to hand.

Second, Indonesia's abysmal human rights record triggers off alarm for the fate of the East Timorese under Indonesian control. One wonders what their future will be like if the Indonesian invasion is successful. Although the conflict has resulted in widespread suffering, 'peace' under Indonesian rule will (on the evidence of Indonesia's other human rights policies) still bring suffering.

Diversity in Unity

The purpose of this section is to examine some of the major domestic trends. With about 90 per cent of its population being Moslems, Indonesia is the world's largest Moslem country. The first theme to be examined is Islam's impact on Indonesia, especially in regard to politics, the Government (which is generally more secular) and the Christians. This is followed by the reactions to the Government's attempt at the rapid western-type modernization of Indonesia's more volatile minorities: the Chinese and the South Moluccans. There is also a final brief mention of Indonesia's newest 'minority': the Indochinese refugees. One of this section's main points is that the Government already has enough problems trying to hold the country together, that it is short-sighted to try also to maintain or gain control over West Irian and East Timor.

The Islamic Impact

The Islamic impact may be seen in three ways: the impact on (1) the vast majority of Indonesians; (2) the more secularly-inclined Government; and (3) the minority of Christians.

The Islamic impact upon the approximately 90 per cent of the people who are considered Moslems, has not been uniform. The impact ranges from devout followers to people who, like many Anglicans in the Church of England in Britain, are Moslem more for statistical purposes than for spiritual guidance and nourishment. The religion has not, then, created a monolithic Moslem nation. The Moslem veneer in political events (with varying depths of Islamic commitment) may be seen in elections.

The 2 May 1977 national election (Indonesia's third since independence) saw the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, a coalition of Moslem parties, presenting itself to the voters as the nation's conscience. The coalition was engineered by the Government. The coalition campaigned under the election symbol of the Ma'abah (the shrine at the centre of Mecca). The Government was reluctant initially to permit such a blatant Islamic symbol but it backed down when the coalition threatened to boycott the election and so rob it of its legitimacy as an expression of popular opinion. (But the PPP was not allowed to use a religious name.)

The election was a forgone conclusion. The Indonesian House of Representatives has a built-in Government majority. The 'functional groups' (Golongan Karya) is composed of persons representing occupations ('functions') such as doctors, civil servants, lawyers, teachers and trade unionists. This is the Government's own political party which, with representatives of the armed forces appointed by the President, has a clear majority over the other parties. The election resulted in a small drop (about one per cent) of its share of the national vote; it obtained 61.8 per cent. The PPP's share increased by 2.5 per cent to 29.6 per cent (the other coalition, consisting of nationalist and Christian parties, obtained 8.6 per cent, a drop of 1.5 per cent since 1971). It is remarkable that after a gap of six years, in which some major events had occurred (such as the Pertamina collapse), the 1977 voting pattern should be so similar to 1971's. The Muslims alleged that some malpractices took place which resulted either in potential voters not receiving their ballot papers or the papers being lost. Also the Government's election rules prohibited the making of negative judgments or taking lightly Government policies.

The Muslim coalition, then, stood no chance of winning but it was able to stop Golkar's election boast that it would get 70 per cent of the votes. A coalition party based on Islam in a country, over 90 per cent of whose population is nominally Moslem, has certain advantages. The many thousands of mosques are not only places of daily worship but are venues for informal discussion. Similarly, there is the Islamic evangelical tradition of preachers going on circuit around mosques, schools and places of work to spread the Word. There are also over 17,000 Islamic schools from primary to tertiary level which are also used for spreading ideas.

The Moslem coalition remains a potent force and probably worries the Government as much as the spectre of communism. Its influence is derived not so much from the two houses of parliament but from its hold over the people whereby the fragile nation could be split by Islamic extremists.[17] The coalition's views are difficult to summarize but broadly they tend to be conservative: against easing up the restrictions against communists, suspicion about the rapid release of communist political prisoners, and opposition to the respect of those human rights which could be said to run contrary to an interpretation of Islam, notably equality for women. While the Government is rightly accused about its holding of political prisoners, it should be noted that there are elements of Indonesian society which take an even harsher line towards them and so the Government is in a difficult situation between organizations like Amnesty International on the one hand and some Islamic politicians on the other.

Even more significant for the Government is the Moslem coalitions's popularity derived from the frustration of people (who may not, ironically, necessarily be devout Moslems) who like the PPP's anti-corruption stand and its opposition to the western modernism reflected in the growing wealth of the ruling elite. While it would be unwise to take the Iranian analogy too far, it could be said that the PPP (like the period before and immediately after the Shah's overthrow) is the rallying point for people who are embittered about the ruling elite and are looking for an alternative government.

Islamic hold over Indonesians, while potent, is not as strong as in other Islamic areas.[18] It has had difficulty over the centuries penetrating the even older and persistent beliefs which are either home grown or brought in with the Asian traders. Most members of the Government, from Suharto downwards, are followers of Javanese mysticism and a mixture of Hindu-Buddhism. The Government is concerned to maintain the distinction between Islam as the major national religion, and Islam as the broader political factor which would link Indonesia's foreign policy with the more devout Islamic nations. A good analogy is the Church of England in England, which is the national church but whose daily impact on decision-making is limited, if not non-existent.

The Government's attitude towards Islam is based on a number of motivations. One is simply that the ruling elite finds Islam unpalatable compared with its own faith. Second, the Government sees itself as pragmatic and not bound by overarching ideologies and finds Islam too restrictive, especially in regard to the Government's foreign political and economic policies. Third, the Government is conscious of the need to maintain unity and to avoid damaging its international image with allegations of Moslem extremists (however small in number) embarking on violence to cow Indonesia's non-Moslems, who would include of course both itself and the other religious minority, the Christians.

Indonesia is unique in the region (especially if one adds in the Pacific islands) in having so little Christian influence. The Christian colonizers found the ground already well sown by the other faiths and could not establish a strong grasp on Indonesian minds, which were already permeated with their home grown mysticism, Asian faiths and Islam.

There are approximately 10 million Christians in Indonesia. They belong both to the Roman Catholic faith and various Protestant denominations, such as the Dutch Reformed Church and the Lutherans. The competition among Christian churches for converts has (like elsewhere) often been a deterrent to winning new converts. Additionally Christian churches in European colonies (such as the Pacific Islands) have won converts (if only statistical ones) by being identified with the ruling elite. This did not occur under the Dutch and most post-independence leaders have not been Christian (though some Christians—notably T.B. Simatupang, who became Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces – were active in the nationalist cause).

The uneven geographical spread of Christians reflects the Christian denominations' focal points of attention. North Sumatra is notable for its Christian population; Christians are only minute percentages of the populations on Java, Bali and South Sulawesi. There are signs (as elsewhere around the globe) that Christianity's pace of winning converts is increasing.

Recent confrontations between Moslems and Christians have been rare. The most publicized took place in 1974, when the World Council of Churches (a Protestant grouping of all their major churches) cancelled the proposed 1975 Fifth Assembly due to be held in Indonesia because 'there have been signs that the Assembly unintentionally could create problems for Indonesia and its churches, and specifically for the relations between Christians and Muslims in that country'.[19] It would seem that the lack of confrontation is due to the fragile truce being honoured by all parties, which is followed since no one is anxious for a head-on collision.

This desire to maintain the delicate balance explains the Government's August 1978 restrictions on religious evangelization,[20] in which restrictions have been placed both on winning converts to the major faiths (Islamic and Christian) and on the use of foreign religious funds within Indonesia. However, it may well be that the Government's implementation of the rules will favour the Moslems. The Moslems have always felt threatened by Christian missionary activities (despite the lack of evidence of a mass conversion to Christianity). Since Christian missionaries derive, comparatively speaking, far more material aid from overseas than do Moslems, the imposition of this rule is bound to hinder the former more than the latter. It is also a governmental recognition of the Moslem feelings against western influence in Indonesia.

Western Modernity

The Suharto Government has adopted the ironical policy of building a nationalistic country on a foundation of foreign aid and foreign capital, with many economic decisions being made either by foreigners or by foreign-educated Indonesians. With foreign money have come foreign influence, foreign corporations, foreign durable consumer goods and foreign bribery and corruption (augmenting what was already in effect a thriving national industry). This impact is most obvious on Java, especially Jakarta, and this has been the main site for confrontations. The collapse of Pertamina, leaving the nation even more indebted to foreigners, added to the xenophobia.

The most violent recent manifestation of this xenophobia occurred in January 1974. The Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Tanaka, the target of demonstrations in Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia and Singapore, was greeted in Jakarta with the most violent demonstrations Indonesia had seen since the anti-Sukarno ferment in 1966. (Though much of the violence may have been initiated by military provocateurs.) Japan's prosperity is based on the import of raw materials. This has resulted in Japan now having a larger impact on Asian affairs than it itself would like (given local suspicions of Japanese power[21]), with Asian cities being 'Japanized' in terms of prevailing commercial arrangements and advertising. Moreover, most Asian countries have an adverse balance of trade with Japan, which continues to pile up a trade surplus.

The Government is in a difficult situation. It needs foreign capital, not only for its development but also to repay the debts it has already incurred. But it is in a weak bargaining position since, with the current economic depression, it is selling raw materials in competition with other nations in the region, and there is a tendency to try to undercut one another. Suharto is in the trap of rising expectations: the Javanese can see the affluence around them and compare it with their own squalor. The students, as usual, are in the forefront of anti-Government campaigning. The devaluation of the Indonesian rupiah on 15 November 1978 has been used by them to illustrate their claims that the Government is mismanaging the economy. The conservative Islamic section of the population was dubious from the start about the need to rely upon western techniques.

As long as the army supports the Government (in effect they are the same), then Indonesian stability is assured. But Indonesia's image as a good investment site is now threatened because of the unrest bubbling up under the veneer of army-imposed stability. Also repression will not solve Indonesia's economic problems. Putting people in jail does not increase rice production or create more jobs.

Looking to the longer term, Indonesia, on current showing, has two possible fates. One is of the continued rigidity of the military, using repression as a time-gaining device to try to create economic growth, though its very structure will hinder the attainment of that goal because the military will continue to use corruption, thereby undermining economic growth. In short, the tools of repression, instead of allegedly creating stable conditions for economic growth, will be used to guarantee the safe use of corruption.

Alternatively, the military's rigidity could be weakened (but not abolished) and be replaced by Latin American-type coups and counter-coups. The military will continue to set the pace for the country's development, if only by its prevention of the coming to power of a stable civilian democracy.

It is against this dismal background, that we should now look at some of Indonesia's minority problems.

The Chinese

There are about 3.5 million Chinese people living in Indonesia; representing over a fifth of all the Chinese in south-east Asia. This total has to be treated with caution since recent censuses have not been compiled on the basis of who are the Chinese in the community. Also, some Chinese have intermarried with Indonesians. Meanwhile, there are also Chinese living overseas (mainly China and Hong Kong) who left Indonesia in the early 1960s under the Jakarta/Peking dual nationality agreement but who have not prospered and would like to return. About 100,000 are involved, though here again the figure has to be treated with caution. Given the size of Indonesia and the traffic between the north-east islands and mainland south-east Asia, it is likely that some Chinese in Malaysia/ Singapore have returned to Indonesia. The Indonesians have claimed that up to US$1 million is sent each year from Indonesia to the Chinese in China (passing through Hong Kong), thereby illustrating continued Chinese allegiance to their original country.[22]

Indonesian antipathy towards the Chinese is derived from two main sources. First, they are seen as being non-Indonesian and a possible security risk because of their link with the communist Chinese. It would appear that the Chinese Government has not tried to mobilize its overseas Chinese as a way of infiltrating south-east Asian countries, presumably thinking that the chances of a communist revolution in these countries are more dependent upon the inhabitants themselves adopting communism and working for revolution.[23] However, the Indonesian Government, with strong pressure from Moslems, has remained suspicious of its Chinese.

Hong Kong has been useful in Chinese-Indonesian relations (formally severed in the late 1960s) since this had been the entrepot through which both countries traded with each other. In October 1977 Indonesia sent a trade delegation to the Canton Trade Fair. The relations, officially described as 'frozen' are warming up once again. It remains to be seen whether this will reduce Indonesian suspicion of its Chinese as communist activists preparing for another 1965 attempted coup (in which ironically the Chinese played only a very minor part since the communist party was not noticeably Chinese). It probably will not because of the even more significant source of antipathy.

Second, the overseas Chinese are seen throughout Asia as tough, almost immoral, traders, who always beat the local traders in business deals. It is often the case that Chinese businessmen are more experienced, more enterprising and more skilled than their Javanese, Sumatran and Balinese counterparts. However, as with the stereotype of the European Jew, not every Chinaman is an affluent businessman grinding the Indonesians into the ground. But the image continues. The Government has limited some of the Chinese participation in the economy, but in a nation which thrives on corruption such limits are not successful. Indeed, it should be more a matter of harnessing Chinese skill in negotiating better deals for Indonesia with foreign companies – though the conservative Moslems would be suspicious of giving the Chinese such a role.

It is difficult to see a way out of this problem. The Chinese, though some intermarry, often prefer their own company and remain aloof from the poorer Indonesians. Though the Government could work harder to get the 800,000 Chinese who do not have Indonesian citizenship to acquire it, Chinese family and ethnic links would still exist outside Indonesia and they would continue to send money out of the country. There are also another 300,000 Chinese who are inclined towards Taiwan, which the Government does not recognize, and who are in effect stateless since they are neither Indonesian nor Chinese. Meanwhile all Chinese, whether of Indonesian citizenship or Chinese or Taiwanese, make a significant contribution to the economy and so it would be damaging to expel them – if a country could be found to have them. On the other hand, the Government is always aware of Moslem hostility towards them and has to tread carefully.

The South Moluccans

If the Chinese constitute Indonesia's most long-running minority problem, the South Moluccans constitute its most publicized one. The publicity has been derived from the South Moluccan community in the Netherlands. While all the recent violence has taken place in Europe, the problem is essentially Indonesia's.

The South Moluccan homeland consists of some 150 small islands in the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago. The islands have a population of about one million persons. Originally colonized by Portugal in 1512, they were taken over by the Netherlands in the 1600s and incorporated into the Dutch East Indies. The islands were a useful source of nutmeg, cloves and other spices.

The Dutch made special efforts to convert the people to Christianity and pressed them into service in the colonial army. They served as the Gurkha equivalent in the Dutch empire, with the motto 'Loyal through Centuries'. They were the most receptive of all the East Indies to Dutch influence. They earned a notorious reputation for commiting atrocities in the vain battle to defeat the post-World War II nationalist independence movement. In the Round Table Conference, the Netherlands sought some measure of local autonomy for the South Moluccas but the final agreement did not provide for complete independence. It did, however, guarantee some measure of autonomy but this was ignored by the new Indonesian Government and when the Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS) was declared on 25 April 1950 it was forcibly suppressed by the Government. The Dutch could do nothing about this except for lodging a note of protest. There has remained a good deal of public sympathy in the Netherlands towards the South Moluccans. For the moment, anyway, the South Moluccan islands remain comparatively tranquil – though predictions of Indonesian stability are always risky.

The instability comes, instead, from the 40,000 persons in the Moluccan community resident in the Netherlands. The core of this community consists of the servicemen and their families who arrived in 1951, having realized that life in the new Indonesia would be difficult. 4,000 Moluccan members of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL) were on Java at the time of the unilateral declaration of the South Moluccan Republic. Their role in the anti-nationalist struggle, plus the fighting in the South Moluccan islands between the RMS and Government forces, precluded their demobilization in the South Moluccas. The Dutch transferred them to the Netherlands. The KNIL members believed this to be a temporary measure, pending the successful independence of their homeland.

They, and their families, have become in effect the Palestinians of the Far East. They have voluntarily refused integration into the Dutch society and have tended to form a closely-knit community, with organizations fostering a sense of commitment to the ideal of an independent Moluccan republic. They claim their Protestant faith and Negroid ethnicity set them apart from other Indonesian islands. It took over a decade for the Indonesian Government to quell all the independence supporters within the South Moluccas, and doubtless these exiles spent many years expecting the fragile nation to collapse, thereby ensuring their journey home.

By the late 1960s, it was clear that the Government was in firm control of the South Moluccas. This realization, coinciding with Palestinian guerilla violence and impatience among the younger members of the exiled community, all indicated the need to take matters into their own hands. Dutch authorities first became aware of this potential for violence in 1970 when, on the eve of the first state visit to Holland by the Indonesian President, a group staged a Palestinian-type commando raid on the Indonesian Ambassador's residence in The Hague. He escaped but his family spent 24 hours as hostages and a Dutch policeman was shot dead. In spring 1974, the Amsterdam office of the Indonesian airline was set on fire. Later that year they did damage of about US$200,000 to the Peace Palace in The Hague, which houses the International Court of Justice, as a counter-activity to the anniversary celebrations of Indonesian independence.

The violence has since continued, with hi-jackings being a favoured technique. The Dutch Government, learning from other west European countries, has taken a tough line and used sophisticated counter-measures to defeat the guerrillas. Although many members of the Dutch Moluccan community support the motives of the guerrillas, it is fair to assume that they are not supporters of their methods. The Dutch Government shows no sign of giving in to their demands.

More to the point, there is little that the Netherlands can do to effect their political demands. In August 1975, the Netherlands and Indonesia agreed on a programme of repatriation. It is believed that about 4,000 South Moluccans have indicated their willingness to return to the South Moluccas as Indonesian citizens. It remains unclear however, just how many have returned and to what extent the vast majority will ever accept the idea of going back on Indonesia's terms.

Indonesia's position is clear: the South Moluccas are a part of Indonesia and will remain in its post-1950 status. It will not get any special treatment as regards autonomy. The Government has little choice in this matter. First, the South Moluccans have still a bad reputation in Indonesia and a backdown by the Government would annoy the Moslems and others who fought the KNIL for independence. Second, the South Moluccan islands are only 100 miles from West Irian. A backdown here would have severe implications for Indonesian unity: it would inspire the West Irian separatists to greater efforts and it would leave a gap in the chain of islands between West Irian and the rest of Indonesia. Finally, it would show that violence pays – and the Government has spent three decades using force, money and friendly persuasion to convince the Indonesian islands that violence will not ensure greater autonomy or independence because the Government is determined not to allow the fragmentation of Indonesia.

Finally, brief mention should be made of the Indochinese refugees, some 31,250 of whom had arrived in Indonesia as of writing.[24] The Indonesian Government (like all the others in South East Asia) has been unwilling to receive them. It has permitted them to land on condition that all who arrived in Indonesia would eventually be resettled elsewhere. But it has limited influence. The country is too large to monitor all seaborne traffic. Since Malaysia began actively to turn away the boat people, thousands have been landing in Indonesia. It is expected that a processing centre for the boat people on Indonesia's Galang Island (near Singapore) will be in operation by November 1979. But it is likely that it will hold only around 10,000 persons, pending permanent resettlement elsewhere. There are now a quarter of a million refugees in Asian camps waiting to be resettled in third countries. It will take years to find these persons appropriate permanent locations. The Indonesian Government has only a few options. It could adopt Malaysia's heavy-handed approach (such as threatening to shoot the refugees) and hope that the people will sail away. It will certainly continue to lobby other governments to take the people. But there remains the growing realization that Indonesia will be unable to remove all its boat people and that it is acquiring yet another minority.

WEST IRIAN

Introduction

> In the beginning the white men came slowly. The first Portuguese and Spanish navigators simply skirted the island, roughly charting its outline. They were followed by the Dutch, British and French. The contacts were brief, occasionally bloody. Only the edges of the great island were touched. Holland made the first great impact on the island's history by simply drawing a line down a shadowy map. In 1848 Holland proclaimed the area west of 141 degrees east to be Dutch territory. This action, like others that were to follow, was done without concern for, consultation with, or even the knowledge of the people concerned. It was done to secure the south-eastern approaches to Holland's flourishing empire in the East Indies. But by that act a million people were to pass out of the history of Melanesian New Guinea and into the history of Indonesia.[25]

West Irian is the easternmost part of Indonesia. The island of New Guinea is the world's second largest island. It remains one of the least explored placed on earth.[26]

The eastern half of the island consists of the newly independent nation of Papua New Guinea. The Dutch claim of 1848 did little to stimulate the other major colonial power in the area, Britain, to claim the other half. Early attempts to explore the eastern half were hindered by the British Colonial Office's lack of support. This may be seen in the quick demise of the New Guinea Company formed in 1867. The British attitude was that, notwithstanding the island's reputed potential wealth because of natural resources, the Government already had enough territories elsewhere to manage. Britain did not want to assume control over a potentially hostile population, about whose number and ways of life not very much was known.[27] Also, the Government was suspicious that the Queensland colonial Government wanted British control over the territory as another source of cheap, black labour.[28]

Fear of possible German annexation of northern New Guinea prompted the Queensland Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith in 1883 to order the claiming of southern New Guinea as a British Crown possession. This was unacceptable to London, which demanded an explanation for his actions. His answer came in the form of a convention of Australian states, New Zealand and Fiji. It met November-December 1883 and demanded that no foreign power be permitted to annex territory south of the Equator; it called upon Britain to annex New Guinea (that is, the south-eastern part of the island); and above all it pledged the Australians to help finance the cost of running the colony. This was the first occasion on which a representative body of responsible Australian politicians pledged their countrymen to undertake a national obligation.[29] The convention was a significant move towards Australian federation and effective independence (1901) and decreed the absorption of Papua into the British Empire. The new nation of Australia took over the running of Papua as one of its first tasks. It took over New Guinea (the German-controlled north-eastern part) in World War I and, in a spirited campaign during the negotiations on the creation of the League of Nations, it forced President Woodrow Wilson to accept (despite one of his 'Fourteen Points' about 'no annexation') Australian annexation of the colony.[30]

Australia's record in the Territory of Papua New Guinea (TPNG) was one of benign neglect. Its determination to be there was derived primarily to keep out others, rather than to develop it economically, let alone maintain the high standards laid down in the League of Nations Covenant. The World War II Japanese invasion of TPNG convinced Australia of its need to maintain this barrier and to hold out for as long as possible, despite the prevailing anti-colonial atmosphere after 1945 in the UN and elsewhere.

Gough Whitlam's Labor Government (1972-75) gave independence to TPNG on 16 September 1975. Despite allegations from conservative politicians that the independence (however correct in principle) was too hurried and alarmist accounts in the mass media (which are eagerly awaiting another Congo-type civil war), Papua New Guinea has not dissolved into tribal warfare, extermination of the whites or the nationalization of foreign assets. On the contrary, it has had one of the smoothest passages into nationhood ever enjoyed by a post-1945 independent colony.[31]

West Irian now constitutes Papua New Guinea's major foreign problem. It shows no sign of early resolution, though recent developments (to be recounted later) have tended to lower the political temperature. If, on the other hand, the West Irian situation hots up, then not only will Papua New Guinea have its first foreign policy crisis, but Australia will also be dragged back into the island's affairs.

West Irian before 1963

> Primitive inhabitants, immense swamps, and a deadly climate combined to provide a protective wall around New Guinea which long thwarted intervention and even exploration. Its location in a backwater at the far end of both the Indian and Pacific Oceans meant that such early contacts as were established, mainly by the corsairs and traders of the various islands in the Moluccas, were restricted to small and isolated pockets along the fringe of western New Guinea.
>
> European explorers sometimes sailed along New Guinea's coasts but their occasional acts of annexation were not taken up by their respective governments. Of the European powers, only the Dutch maintained a long, albeit haphazard, interest because of their monopoly of the spice trade in the neighbouring Moluccas. They were satisfied, however, to view New Guinea as a convenient buffer against foreign interests and to recognize the supposed claims of their protectorate of Tidore to some of the coastal islands off the western tip.[32]

The islands of New Guinea, both east and west, has the rare status of being colonized by European nations whose enthusiasm for additional colonies was on the wane and whose control was haphazard, if not reluctant. Only the Germans were enthusiastic and this was due to their comparatively late start in the race for empire which had resulted in there being little land left for colonization. It is reasonable to assume (given Germany's lack of participation in its new colony) that had Germany started the race for empire earlier and acquired African or other Asian colonies, its interest in north-eastern New Guinea would also have been minimal.

West Irian was part of the Dutch East Indies. However it is geologically and geographically more closely related to Australasia than Indonesia. Much the same could be said of its vegetation. The people, too, have different ethnic background, languages and religion (which is not predominantly Muslim or Christian but animistic, with worship of the spirits which the poeple believe to inherit their surrounding world).[33] Its eventual inclusion in Indonesia, then, was due more to political factors rather than cultural ones – without even reference to the people themselves being permitted to explain their own point of view.

West Irian was part of the territory of the Sultanate of Tidore (in the Moluccas). The Dutch did not, however, devote the same attention to it as other parts of the East Indies. It was a convenient waste land. There was limited Dutch penetration beyond the coastal towns and at no time did Dutch control extend to all the colony's inhabitants. Its main purpose, besides being a market for the eastern end of the Dutch Empire, was as a site, at Boven Digoel, for a notorious internment camp (which once held some major Indonesian nationalist leaders).

During the 1945 discussions among the nationalists as to the future boundaries of the independent nation whose existence they were soon to declare, there was some disagreement over West Irian's inclusion within the new nation. One view was that the new nation should try to conform to some measure of cultural similarity. This would have excluded West Irian but, ironically, for the sake of consistency would have implied the absorption of parts of Malaya. Another view (held by Sukarno) was that the new nation should simply be created from the entire Dutch colony. This view (which prevailed) required continued inclusion of West Irian in the new nation.

The Netherlands opposed West Irian's inclusion in Indonesia for a number of reasons. It thought that West Irian was potentially rich in raw materials. It thought (wrongly) that it would need an Asian area for persons not wishing to live in Indonesia and not willing or not able to go to the Netherlands. There was also a need to placate domestic Dutch opposition to granting independence to Indonesia by retaining, in effect, a separate Dutch colony.

In the Round Table negotiations at The Hague which led to Indonesian independence, it was agreed that West Irian's fate would be decided later. After 1949, the Dutch undertook for the only time in their control of the territory, a programme of economic development, with the main impact being felt in the coastal areas. Besides being motivated by its original ideas, the Netherlands hoped to show that the land could prosper far more than the rest of its former colony. It doubtless looked to the eventual conversion of the colony to an independent, flourishing pro-Dutch nation. Faced with the growing realization that West Irian's economic potential was going to take longer to come to fruition (if ever) the Netherlands nonetheless found itself unable to back down to Indonesian pressure to transfer it to Indonesia. The Netherlands was faced with domestic Dutch opposition to such an act. And so it tried to hold out. It followed a policy which was inadequate but which was politically less damaging than surrender to Indonesia. It was not motivated by a desire to follow the wishes of the West Irian people, who were not consulted formally about their fate. Indeed some Indonesian-speaking persons on the coastal areas were advocating absorption into Indonesia.

The Dutch were not interested in their opinions. Deeper in West Irian, which had little benefit from Dutch economic policies, people were probably unaware of the whole issue.

All this was taking place at a time when all the other imperial powers in western Europe (except Portugal) was divesting themselves of colonies. Being so isolated from Holland and separated from it by Indonesia itself and half the globe, West Irian could not expect much military assistance in the event of an Indonesian invasion. Moreover, the continued Dutch control gave the Sukarno Government an excuse to acquire Dutch property in Indonesia and expel Dutch citizens. Indonesia did mount some military operations but they were ineffective. Indeed some Indonesian personnel were handed upon capture to the Dutch by the people whom they had come to liberate. The Dutch lost, however, the larger political war, especially in the UN. The Dutch were caught in a pincer: the growing Third World bloc naturally opposed Dutch rule and sided with Indonesia, then one of the bloc's leaders; while the United States wanted to remain on good terms with Indonesia and so did not help Holland. Australia was the only major nation to support the Dutch and this was due to Australian fears of the implications for TPNG which Australia wanted to control indefinitely.[34]

To save Dutch prestige, West Irian was handed over, not directly to Indonesia, but in October 1962 to the UN. The UN in turn handed it over to Indonesia on 1 May 1963, on the understanding that there would be a plebiscite in 1969 to test West Irian opinion. The 1969 Act of Free Choice was a farce.[35] There was no plebiscite as such but a sample of pro-Indonesian opinion drawn from tribal leaders. By this time, Sukarno was out of power and Indonesia was run by pro-western generals. Australia, though still unhappy about the Act's implications for the eastern half of the island, decided to turn a blind eye to the Act, rather than campaign at the UN against it (which would have been a forlorn act given the prevailing opinion).[36] The UN General Assembly 'took note' of the outcome (rather than 'endorsed' it as some writers have claimed) in November 1969 in Resolution 2504 (XXIV), adopted with 30 abstentions and no negative votes.[37]

Writing before the UN vote, one writer suggested that:

> It may be better for the UN Mission to withdraw rather than to sanction the illegal procedure. Such an act would also gain for the UN as a whole the reward of Papuan gratitude. Otherwise an extremely dangerous precedent may be created by the UN in becoming an accessory to the denial of freedom and persecution of a nation which has the same right to independence as all those freed under the law (sic) of the UN Declaration on Decolonization.[38]

The UN's credibility, in fact, has not suffered in the way predicted a decade ago; though this is little cause for joy. The UN's participation in the handover and later Act of Free Choice was soon overshadowed by the UN's lack of success in settling other international crises, such as southern Africa and the Middle East. Also, continued Indonesian control suited the political interests both of Indonesia's allies in the Third World and those nations which were courting Indonesia's friendship, notably those in the west. Finally, Indonesia has kept West Irian isolated from the world's political stage so that there have been few persons or organizations which have become interested in its fate, let alone been willing to champion its cause.

West Irian – A Description

> New Guinea is the largest island in the world after Greenland. Approximately half the land, and between a quarter and a third of the total population (estimated at three and a half million), now belong to Indonesia. In this area is Carstensz Top mountain, at over five thousand metres (16,500 feet) not only the highest peak on the island, but in the whole of south-east Asia and Australasia. It lies in a region of inaccessible highland valleys stretching for most of the length of the island and inhabited by a rich variety of tribes with many of which contact has only been established in recent years. Around the coasts are extensive areas of lowland forest and swamp in the south, often tidal over wide areas, densely overgrown and difficult to penetrate. Much of the rich plant life is still uncatalogued, there are over one hundred species of mammal, almost all marsupial and in some districts the indigenous population remain isolated and continue to practice cannibalism. Where the people came from, and when their migrations took place, is unknown, but in spite of an immediate superficial resemblance to Africans, with their black skins, woolly hair and broad noses, any close relationship has now been disproved, while their affinity with Australian aborigines is only tenuous. The diversity of languages, of which nearly one thousand have been identified, in this the world's most complex linguistic region, as well as of physical and cultural variations, is bewildering but, with the exception of a few pygmy negrito groups, the vast majority of the population are fundamentally similar and classified as Papuans.[39]

West Irian has been inhabited for around 30,000 years (though accuracy is impossible). The inhabitants have retained many of their early forms of living. They are scattered throughout the whole territory in small clans and are kept apart by terrain, language and customs. No native language has more than 150,000 speakers and some are spoken by only a few thousand. The people live mainly by subsistence farming. Little surplus food is produced because of the considerable costs of transporting it to other markets.

There are about 10,000 – 15,000 Indonesians as well as European missionaries and mineral explorers and some Asian traders. Most of these people live in the coastal towns. The capital city, also on the coast, is Jayapura, with a population of about 30,000. This rundown ex-colonial town is largely operated by Indonesians and Asians, with Irianese taking mainly only menial positions. The city has not suffered from the urban explosion which has adversely affected other cities in developing countries, not least Jakarta. Since personal advancement (in western terms) is usually dependent upon urban living and education, the Irianese outside Jayapura and the other towns, stand little chance of advancement. Those already in the towns are not put in positions of authority because Jakarta does not trust them. Indeed, the Indonesians have a highly racist view of West Irians, who are considered inferior to other Indonesians – except, of course, those who turn away from their own culture and identify far more with Indonesian culture, modes of behaviour and language. Few have made the transition. The most articulate minority who once advocated absorption into Indonesia lost their appetite for Indonesian rule once they began to realise the full cost of Indonesian rule. They had swopped, in effect, one colonizer for another. Additionally, the Indonesian military and other officials enjoy considerable wealth in West Irian (compared with the local people) and are determined not to share it with the West Irian people.

The main agents for social change (such as it is) are Christian missionaries. They may not be winning many converts but they do at least provide basic social functions.

There are about 200 missionaries – making West Irian one of the world's most important areas of missionary activity. In general terms, the Protestants are active in building hospitals and clinics, while the Roman Catholics tend to concentrate on agricultural projects and schooling. Their work is not without its problems, especially those created by the more fundamentalist Protestant missionaries. In early 1975, for example, tribespeople killed and ate 13 local assistants of a mission when the European missionary went on leave.[40] Unlike the mainline Protestant and Roman missionaries, these people are too harsh on local customs and too eager to impose their doctrinaire views on the inhabitants. This problem should not detract from the fact that most missionaries are doing work which the Government has been slow to carry out. Their aircraft services, for instance, are a very important source of transport both within West Irian and between West Irian and other areas, and they are well liked by the inhabitants (if only for the services they provide, rather then the Word which they preach). It remains to be seen how their work will be affected by the 1978 limitations on Christian activities.

Islam, by contrast, has made very little impression. West Irian is not a major area for conversion because of Indonesians' racist views of the people as being evidently unsuitable potential Moslems. There is also a great cultural divergence between West Irian and Islamic teaching, such as the significance of the pig which runs contrary to Islam. Also, it is likely that the people would not subscribe to a faith which is closely identified with a ruling culture which they themselves (if they are aware of it) abhor.

Although the area itself is inhospitable, it may be wealthy in terms of copper, nickel, oil and timber. As the Dutch found, its rugged terrain prevents a quick return on investment. However, with the world entering a prolonged period of shortages in raw materials, it may eventually be profitable to exploit the materials since the increased market prices will compensate for the initial considerable capital outlay. Also, given the area's startling beauty, there is a tourist potential (tourism being one of the world's major growth industries). But this will not be realized as long as there is violence.

Finally, mention should be made of the particular case of the Dani people. This case is not necessarily representative of all the confrontations between Indonesian and West Irian tribes but it is one of the most well known. In 1971, the Indonesian Government launched Operation Koteka, a programme to 'civilize' the Dani people. The programme sought, in effect, to turn them into good Indonesian citizens. They were encouraged to cease wearing traditional clothing (such as it is) and to wear more modest clothing, to eat rice and less pork, and to speak the national language. When Mr Hanbury-Tenison visited the people two years later,[41] the campaign had collapsed. The Dani still covered themselves with pig fat to keep out the cold, women still cut off a finger or two each time a husband or child died, and men still devoted time to stealing wives, pigs or just fighting. More recently, the Government has decided to drop the campaign entirely. The Dani tribe won. But only after great suffering and persecution. While the Dani practices (illustrated above) have a colourful attractiveness, it would be wrong to take a patronizing or romantic approach to what has been a violent episode in recent West Irian history. The tribe reacted against 'Indonesianization' not merely to perpetuate the practices previously noted but because it represented a fundamental threat to their way of life. The practices were the tip of a cultural iceberg and the tribe recognized the full implications of Indonesia's attempts to 'civilize' it.

Indonesia's main motivation was that it saw the Dani tribe (part of what it already regarded as a racially inferior population) as being particularly contracy to the image it wishes to convey to the world: that of a modern and rapidly developing nation. The isolated tribes (of which the Dani is the most famous as a result of foreign writers) undermined that image to such an extent that it regarded it as sufficient to warrant a determined effort to stop it.

Finally, it is worth recalling that in a wider sense the Dani tribe's suffering and eventual victory manifest the continuing significance of events which took many decades before the present tribespeople were born. West Irian's status as part of Indonesia is due to an accident of history – the Dutch got in first and the Dutch connection provided the bridge over which the Indonesian Government travelled to gain control over West Irian. If Britain had acted more quickly, then West Irian would today either be an independent nation or part of a larger Papua New Guinea. Such are the vagaries of the European colonization of the world.

West Irian in Rebellion

> When the Dutch occupation of West New Guinea ended and control passed to the Indonesian state in 1963, it was commonly believed that over a time, the West Papuan population would come to identify with the Indonesian Republic. This simply did not happen. Their desire to run their own affairs and to seek social change within the terms of their own cultures – characteristically expressed during Dutch colonial days in millenarian form and on occasion in acts of physical rebellion – has strengthened. For fourteen years a struggle has been carried on against Indonesian state control.[42]

The rebellion is notable more for its longevity than its level or intensity of fighting. The 'national liberation movement' is the Organisasi Papua Mederka (OPM), the Free Papua Movement, formed in 1963. Its roots go back to the terminal stages of Dutch rule when, in the 1930s and 1940s, some sporadic acts of violence took place in a move to achieve independence. It was initially pre-Indonesian but (as noted above) Indonesian racist attitudes helped turn pro-Indonesian West Irian people into anti-Indonesian people. More generally during the time of Dutch rule, it is now impossible to assess how much anti-imperialist fervour existed among the scattered and isolated inhabitants, most of whom may have been unaware of their being ruled from the Netherlands.

Much of the same could be said of the initial period of Indonesian control. After all if the population had been set against Indonesian rule, it would have fought against West Irian incorporation. Nonetheless this is still no guarantee of a good foundation upon which to expand Indonesian control – a lack of fervent nationalism is hardly the same as a desire for Indonesian citizenship. If the Indonesian Government had adopted the Dutch policy of benign neglect, then it is possible that the OPM would not have strayed outside its area in which it was created, the Numfur-Biak area. However, the Government opted for an Indonesianization programme, which stimulated resentment against Jakarta. The programme has been unsuccessful, if not counterproductive.

However, the Government was in a difficult situation. The Sukarno Government had made the acquisition of West Irian one of the major components of its foreign policy and was determined to hold on to it. The Suharto Government has been obliged to maintain that policy since, notwithstanding Sukarno's faults, it would appear that many influential Indonesians liked it. The Indonesianization programme is a logical progression since this territory, which previously had had little connection with Jakarta, had to be converted into a part of Indonesia. Additionally, the late 1960s saw a slow trend within the Australian Government towards granting independence to Papua New Guinea; a trend which was greatly accelerated and completed under the Whitlam Government. This trend worried Jakarta. If the alarmist predictions came to pass and Papua New Guinea did become another Congo in being torn apart by civil war, then some of the violence could spill over the border into West Irian, thereby encouraging West Irian dissidence. On the other hand, if Papua New Guinea proved to be a success story in decolonization, then it could outpace economic development in West Irian and stimulate unrest among the nation's poorer neighbours, who could have blamed their comparative poverty on Jakarta and could have seen their salvation in terms either of complete independence or in federation with Papua New Guinea. Either prediction was gloomy; so far, the latter seems the more accurate. Finally, the Indonesian Government may have been worried about UN criticism of its lack of commitment towards the people whom it had claimed in 1969 would benefit from its rule and who were wanting its rule.

Jakarta believed that the way to avoid further discontent was to accelerate the rate of economic development. The Government put a disproportionate share of its development funds into West Irian. Although West Irian is the least populated area of Indonesia, it has received the highest per capita assistance of any of the provinces. The result has been yet another source of trouble. The urban-based West Irianese are now undergoing a period of rising expectations. They can see the other people in the towns growing rich and compare their wealth with their own comparative poverty. For despite the investment and consequent economic progress (compared with West Irian's previous lack of economic development) the average West Irian has derived little benefit from the progress. The Government has not acted out of a desire to quell West Irian anti-Indonesian feeling by buying loyalty. On the contrary, it wants to maintain control over West Irian by expanding the Indonesian urban settlement. West Irian's economic potential is at last being realized. But this is not so much for the benefit of the people but to expand Jakarta's wealth and that of multinational corporations.

Recent Developments

> West Irian does not dominate PNG and it never will. PNG would have reason to be concerned if there were an Indonesian movement to incorporate her in Indonesia, or if there were a West Irianese movement to tie PNG to West Irian and rule the two from there, but such movements do not exist and are not in sight, any more than the reverse. And after independence, border movement problems should be solvable by normal diplomatic procedures.[43]

That comforting prediction was made in June 1972. The border situation had changed considerably since then. Indeed, the entire West Irian situation has not been as tranquil as the speaker implied. Since Indonesia remains reluctant to have foreign discussion of the internal West Irian situation, much of West Irian's affairs now have to be viewed from the perspective of its closest neighbour, Papua New Guinea.

All guerrilla wars are difficult to assess. The West Irian one is taking place, moreover, in one of the world's most isolated regions, amid one of the world's most rugged terrains. It is also taking place generally away from the coastal areas so that one gets, not for the first time in areas of rural guerrilla warfare, two nations: one free from violence and the other suffering from violent incidents.

Peter Hastings, one of Australia's most experienced (if rather conservative) journalists covering the Asian scene, visited West Irian in late 1978 and filed stories of some promising economic progress. He told of the benefits coming from the comparatively high Indonesian investment, of a new spirit of optimism, and even the new taste for rice, though he did note that the OPM was still in existence.[44] The latter fact is, of course, to be expected since Indonesia's economic policies are not aimed at benefiting the West Irian people.

Indeed, the late 1970s have also seen continued guerrilla operations though the accounts and allegations are difficult to verify. Here are a few examples. In the period January 1976 to April 1978, 3,515 Indonesian soldiers and 5,269 Irianese villagers and guerrillas were killed, so the OPM claimed.[45] In September 1977 the OPM claimed to have shot down an Indonesian military DC3 aircraft.[46] In mid-1978, OPM guerrillas captured senior and junior Indonesian armed personnel and tried to use them as a lever for the convening of an international conference (to include Australia and Papua New Guinea) to negotiate their claims for independence; the hostages were later released by their captors.[47] Both 1977 and 1978 were marked by OPM claims to have damaged Indonesia's development programmes by sabotaging industrial plant.[48]

Meanwhile, there have been various movements by West Irianese refugees in to Papua New Guinea. They have brought allegations of Indonesian brutality. The number involved is disputed but must run into the thousands.[49] The OPM is also using the country as a staging post for cross-border raids into West Irian to harrass Indonesian forces and these raids have resulted in Indonesian attacks on alleged OPM bases in Papua New Guinea,[50] which have in turn stimulated official complaints from Port Moresby Government.[51] To make matters worse, there have been allegations that the Government's forces have helped the OPM, especially in regard to supplying arms.[52] The Government is in a difficult position because few of its citizens like Indonesia enough to support their Government in taking military steps to curb the OPM on its border – even if it had the forces (which it does not[53]) but they do not want to be dragged into a military confrontation with Indonesia over the plight of West Irian by overtly helping the OPM.

Australia, too, is in a dilemma. It remains heavily committed to Papua New Guinea economically (about a third of the national budget comes from official Australian aid) and some Australians remain in the country. With the Vietnam nightmare still potent in Australian politics, voters would not support Australian military intervention in Papua New Guinea, and certainly not to help Indonesia, which has clashed with Australia in the past. Moreover, given Indonesia's poor image in south-east Asia, Australia is also reluctant to become identified with a repressive regime. Hostility towards Indonesia remains a theme in Australian politics and any Government (as will be seen shortly in the context of East Timor) has to tread a delicate path between antagonising a nation which outnumbers Australia 10:1 and yet must avoid being seen as too pro-Indonesian for fear of a domestic backlash. Finally, there is the old problem of Indonesia's instability: the Government is worried that an unstable Indonesia could be tempted to embark upon military adventures as a way of obtaining national unity to unite against a common foreign foe, or that the Government could be replaced by anti-Australian leaders. The Government's policy is: a secure and stable Indonesia is of 'immense and direct concern to Australia'.[54] This has resulted in Australian military aid to Indonesia[55] – including providing military personnel to map West Irian, which raises the prospect of Australia having to negotiate with the OPM if any of its aircraft crash in OPM-controlled territory and its personnel captured by the OPM.[56]

The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr Mochtar Kusamaatmadja, visited Papua New Guinea in December 1978, the first visit by an Indonesian minister since Papua New Guinea independence. His visit coincided with his Government's decision to curtail its military campaigns against the OPM and to adopt a more peaceful way of dealing with West Irian problems.[57] His trip was preceded with news that the OPM leader, Jacob Prai, had been captured on an illegal visit to Papua New Guinea and although the Government refused to hand him over to Indonesia (a decision reluctantly accepted by Indonesia) it seems that his days of combat are over.[58] 1979 therefore dawned with the prospect of more peace on the West Irian border than had happened for some years. In early June 1979, President Suharto visited Papua New Guinea. The joint communique issued by Suharto and Somare contained an agreement that 'measures should be taken against elements misusing their respective territories by conducting hostile acts against Papua New Guinea and Indonesia'.[59] Since no dissidents are using West Irian as a base for operations against the PNG Government, the 'elements' refers to the OPM.

It remains to be seen how well Papua New Guinea can implement the agreement. West Irians are physically little different from its own citizens who cross the border at will. Moreover there is no evidence to suggest that the sympathy which its citizens have for West Irian has declined as a result of the two Indonesian visits. In a large country of comparatively few law enforcement officials, information from private citizens on OPM movements is essential. The officials cannot patrol all the border all the time. But it is unlikely that they will get the private information they need to carry out the agreement.

There is no guarantee that the OPM guerrillas, now numbering probably less than a thousand, will necessarily succumb to Indonesia's blandishments and may well continue the campaign.[60] Additionally, there is no guarantee that Indonesia, which has a flair for military overreaction, will continue for long a policy of peaceful persuasion when it believes that military force can solve problems. In short, the guerrilla struggle, though tranquil at the moment, may not decline but may escalate.

After all, the real problem is not one of cross border movements or Indonesian military operations. Instead it is Indonesia's basic policy towards West Irian. It has a racist approach towards the people, it is exploiting the natural resources for its own benefit and doing little for the people, its administration is riddled by corruption, and it is violent towards all who disagree with it. In short, its policy contains the seeds of the policy's eventual destruction – though it is presently unclear how the destruction will come about or what will replace it.

Finally, there is the underlying question of why should West Irian remain in Indonesia? A recent book has presented the question of why should a state like Indonesia, which is based on colonial boundaries, have any special priority over regional or local differences in populations?[61] Indonesia as a state is an accident of colonial history. With a few other events in history, the present nation could be very different. If the Dutch had been more greedy and the British just as apathetic, they could have taken control of all of New Guinea, thereby making Indonesia even larger. It could have included the territory of, say, Brunei.[62] Alternatively, if the Germans had been more aggressive and started taking previously claimed land, rather than being satisfied with unclaimed land, then some of the present Indonesia would have gone from German control to the status of a League of Nations Mandate and then to British or Australian control. The permutations are endless. But the speculation remains that perhaps the people of West Irian would be better off as part of a Melanesian federation.

EAST TIMOR

Introduction

> If, consistent with its general weakness, Portugal had retained into the twentieth century only isolated small imperial enclaves in Africa, as in Asia, it is unlikely that there would have been many problems in decolonization. Goa was easily taken by India when Portugal continued to ignore appeals to discuss the question. Macao in China and Timor in Indonesia, are at the mercy of those countries should they decide to take action.[63]

Indonesia took action in 1975. The Portuguese colony, which had unilaterally declared its independence of Lisbon, was overrun and a brutal (if hardly publicized) conflict took place, which continues, at a lower intensity, to this day. Indonesia has acquired its "27th province", another minority population, and another area of conflict.

As with West Irian, East Timor's future status vis-a-vis Indonesia is not assured. It would appear that a reversion to full independence is unlikely in the near future. But few countries recognize Indonesian control over East Timor. The UN General Assembly and Security Council remain opposed to the Indonesian annexation. Activists around the world[64] are determined to continue the struggle. Most importantly, even though many East Timorese leaders are dead or otherwise out of combat, the people have shown no sign of surrendering to Indonesia. Large areas of East Timor remain outside Indonesian control. Even though the Indonesian Government regards the East Timorese as a 'minority', most of the East Timorese, it is safe to claim, do not wish to see themselves in this light. As with West Irian, this writer reaffirms that the inclusion of East Timor in a study of Indonesia does not imply his acceptance of Indonesian control over East Timor.[65]

An important lesson of Indonesian post-1949 history is that the country's unification, particularly in regard to the outer provinces, can never be taken for granted. All that can be said is that at some particular time, the nation consists of a certain number of stable provinces and a certain number in revolt, any one of which may be successful. It is possible that, given the very poor performance of the Indonesian forces in East Timor, other provinces may decide that the time has come again for another attempt at independence. The West Irian conflict must be seen in this light. The increase in guerrilla activities was partly related to the OPM wishing to exploit the force's weakness by being deployed in East Timor. Similarly the Government's recent change in policy, away from such a severe military line, is in part a reaction to western (mainly American) advice that a guerrilla conflict cannot be settled by military means alone and that more should be done to win the hearts and minds of people. Also, it is a reflection of a fact of military life: the Government, because of East Timor, does not have the military capacity to wage a major campaign in West Irian. In short, although Indonesia claims East Timor to be part of it, the cost of acquiring it may weaken the Government's capacity to control all the other potential or actual areas of disintegration.

East Timor: Geography and History

> That a fine, white sandalwood of very high quality grew freely in Timor, ensured this relatively insignificant looking tree would become the magnet attracting many peoples to the small island. Lying so close to populations to whom the aromatic sandalwood was a necessity, Timor assumed all the glory and wonder of Paradise in the minds of the surrounding merchant traders and was already producing quantities of sandalwood for the Chinese market, many hundreds of years before Vasco da Gama sailed round the Cape of Good Hope.[66]

East Timor is part of the Lesser Sundas archipelago, running east of Java. The entire chain of islands represents less than four per cent of Indonesia's total land area. The Timorese terrain is rugged and the weather tropical, with violent monsoons during December to April.

> The island of Timor is something of a racial meeting-point, a place populated by successive waves of migrants, predominantly Malay and Mesanesian. Arab, Chinese and African faces are also part of the Timorese crowd (the Africans were brought as slaves or conscript soldiers by the Portuguese); some faces also bear features strikingly similar to those of the Australian Aborigine. Timor has been described as 'a Babel, resulting from the convergence of more varied ethnic groups, or an inextricable melting-pot of ethnic groups'.
>
> The Atoni ('people of the dry land'), who have inhabited the central highlands of the island for centuries, are believed to have been the original inhabitants of Timor. They speak a language known as Timorese or Vaiqueno. The Tetum-speaking Belu are more recent intruders. The Atoni occupy most of what is now Indonesian Timor. The Belu people are located on the rich southern coastal plain which extends either side of the border, although their greater number is concentrated in the east. The migrations of both Atoni and Belu occurred many centuries ago, so that a distinct Timorese culture existed well before European colonization. Indeed the Tetum word 'malai' meaning foreigner, has become a concept important to all Timorese and the theme of the Timorese united against the malai is deeply embedded in Timorese history. Overall, the dominant racial groups are Proto-Malay with an admixture of Papuan and Melanesian types, largely in the interior of East Timor. The frizzy hair of many of the Atoni points to Melanesian descent, while most Belu people have wavy to straight hair, similar to the Malays.[67]

Timor fell under European colonization during the period when Portugal's empire-building days were drawing to a close and they were more concerned with holding on to what they had rather than acquiring new colonies, while the Dutch empire-building was getting into full swing. The Portuguese landed in Timor in about 1520 looking for the sandalwood tree. In 1566 Portuguese Dominican friars established a base from which to win converts. Christianity and trade, as usual, were to go hand in hand. By the end of the sixteenth century, Timor was Portuguese territory and the sandalwood export industry was well underway. The land still suffers from that exploitation because of soil erosion and poor soil texture. In 1613, the Dutch commenced what was to be a campaign lasting decades in which they sought to gain control of Timor and the surrounding small islands. This was but an example of the wider struggle going on between the two nations, with Dutch acquisitions in what is now Indonesia being matched by increased Portuguese determination to hold on to what remained of their empire in this area.

The Dutch finally got control of West Timor in 1859 and held on to it until 1949 when, with the rest of present day Indonesia (except West Irian) it was given its freedom from The Netherlands. The Portuguese managed to hold on to East Timor and the enclave in West Timor called Oecusse Ambeno. It is worth noting that both colonial powers had problems maintaining their control, not only with respect to one another, but from the Timorese people, who were neither easy to colonize nor favourably disposed towards European rule. Rebellions continued during this century.

West Timor has a population of about 900,000 people. Most live from fishing or from a subsistence farming. Until the events in 1974, very little attention was paid by the outside world to this part of Indonesia and even now little is known because of the isolation and rugged terrain.

East Timor, consisting of about 19,000 square kilometres (just over 7,400 square miles) of the total 30,000 square kilometres of Timor, had in 1970 609,477 people. More recent estimates put the population at between 650,000 and 670,000 people. It is the third largest non-self-governing territory (after Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and Namibia) in the list of the UN Special Committee on Decolonization – over 30 UN member-states have a population of below one million.[68] It is worth noting, then, that in terms of the UN membership population, an independent East Timor could survive as a nation-state – provided Indonesia permitted it.

From Colony to Independence to Indonesian Invasion

> On 2 December 1975 Adam Malik (the then Indonesian Foreign Minister) visisted Atambua in Indonesian Timor, where military training of anti-FRETILIN forces had been taking place for nearly a year: There he announced to the press 'Diplomacy is finished. It is now up to the people of East Timor.' He told the leaders of the pro-Indonesian parties 'You are racing against time, and you face a tough struggle ahead. However you need not worry, we will give you our full support, quietly or openly. Now we meet at Atambua, and soon we shall meet again in Dili (capital of East Timor). I expect you to invite me to come to Dili soon. The solution to the Timor problem is now in the front line of battle.' Of course this last statement shocked many of the Jakarta diplomats, especially the Australians, who had always believed they could persuade the Indonesians against a violent solution to 'the Timor problem'.[69]

The fate of Portuguese Timor was changed in April 1974, when the Armed Forces Movement took over in Portugal and ended the dictatorship of Marcello Caetano. For well over a decade, Portugal had been waging a bitter campaign to hold on to its colonies, whose total area was twenty-two times the size of Portugal, and was ruining Portugal in the process, since expenditure per capita was exceeding that of the United States in the Vietnam conflict. One of the main policies of the new rulers, then, was to dissolve that liability as quickly as possible but in an orderly fashion. Events in Africa soon showed that the colonies could be given independence either quickly or in an orderly fashion, but not both.

East Timor was different from the African colonies in one major respect. In Africa, the conflict had been so intense that it was the main factor in initiating the Armed Forces Movement. East Timor, by contrast, had been comparatively tranquil. There was the residual hostility of the people towards their Portuguese rulers but there were few political activists in the western sense. Catholicism and animism were the main concerns of the people; not political ideology.

East Timor came low down on the list of the new Government's priorities. It was the colony furthest away from Portugal and its relative tranquility meant that the continued presence of Portuguese forces would be minimal economic burden. But in retrospect, it is clear that the April 1974 revolution revived old ideas of independence and so it was wrong for the Government to think that it had time on its side in dealing with East Timor. The Government was confronted by three main political viewpoints: the UDT Party (Uniao Democratica Timorense) advocated in general terms some continued Portuguese control; the APODETI Party (Associaco Popular Democratica Timorense) advocated East Timor's integration into Indonesia, and FRETILIN advocated complete independence. The Frente Revolucionaria do Timor Leste Independente (Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor) was formed in September 1974 and was inspired by the revolutionary nationalism of African leaders like Eduardo Mondlane, Agostinho Neto and Amilcar Cabral. A forerunner had been the Social Democratic Association of Timor, formed in April 1974. The change of name reflected a broadening of the political foundation of the party so as to include a wide range of persons motivated by the common concern of national independence. Despite Indonesian allegations, it was not a communist party as such.

The Lisbon Government was in a difficult position. Chaos at home and in the African colonies meant that it had little time for mediating between these factions. Indeed, the factions were different from the usual pre-independence groupings (as in present-day Zimbabwe-Rhodesia) which agree over ends but not over means. These factions, which were at the time largely unrepresentative of the majority of Timorese, disagreed over both ends and means so that no compromise was possible. The political wrangling went on throughout 1974, with temporary political coalitions being formed and then dissolved.

By mid-1975 it seemed that the Government had found a basis for a new constitution, with an election to take place in October 1976 and for complete independence to be given in October 1978. FRETILIN, which had boycotted some of the negotiations, insisted that there be immediate and full independence. It was the UDT, however, which forced the pace of events by seizing, on 11 August 1975, key installations in the colony's two main cities. The Government dithered, partly because it could not rely on the loyalty of its Timorese troops. Its representatives fled the colony. Most of the troops went over to FRETILIN and this was a decisive factor in its winning the ensuing civil war. About 2,000 people were killed in the conflict. FRETILIN became the de facto Government.

In retrospect, the period between the FRETILIN victory and the Indonesian invasion three months later, was by Timorese standards, a golden age. FRETILIN started immediately to make good the damage caused by 450 years of Portuguese rule. The economy was geared to produce goods for Portugal; now it had to look after itself. Some steps were taken to introduce political reforms, especially at village level. Agricultural co-operatives were created; mass literacy campaigns were commenced in rural areas; Timorese, rather than Portuguese culture, was revived. Visitors to East Timor at this time, were impressed with the progress that was being made. FRETILIN, by these reforms, converted itself from a political faction to the ruling body of East Timor. Its achievement was immense. It was this early and temporary golden age which has no doubt inspired the people to fight the Indonesian invaders. On 28 November 1975, FRETILIN declared the colony to be independent. It renamed the area the Democratic Republic of East Timor. Lisbon refused to recognize the declaration. In legal terms, the decision may have been premature, since there is no guarantee that it had full control over the territory to which it claimed title. But FRETILIN was clearly consolidating its command and so it was only a matter of time. Also, for DRET to have come into existence, would not have required the acceptance of the declaration by the Lisbon Government anyway. The main proof of just how successful was FRETILIN, is Indonesia's reaction. It invaded in early December 1975.

Indonesia's Involvement in East Timor

It is clear now that the so-called Democratic Republic of East Timor was living on borrowed time. It was soon to be engulfed by forces (both military and political) over which it had little control and often little perception. Indonesia, and not Portugal, became the main external agent governing East Timor's fate.

The decision to invade East Timor would not have been made lightly. The Government had, it is true, been planning for it since the Lisbon coup in April 1974. The extent of the invasion alone indicated that the Government had decided to launch a major offensive since it perceived (quite correctly) that only a major operation would stand any chance of success. The East Timorese were too supportive of their new Government to be easily cowed.

But launching an invasion represented one of the most important decisions made by the present Indonesian Government. The Government had enough problems to cope with, without adding the invasion of East Timor. There was the risk that the invasion would not be successful and that its armed forces would not only be damaged (in terms of losses and a drop in morale) but also that its capacity to quell other potential or actual rebels would be undermined. Even if the attack were successful, the Indonesian Government would have to devote resources to administering its new conquest. A third possibility (which has eventuated) was of a no-win-no-lose situation. The possibility of being sucked into a protracted conflict in East Timor would increase the risk of other provinces renewing their efforts to obtain independence – in seeking to hold on to East Timor, Indonesia could lose other parts of the nation. Additionally, given Indonesia's fragile economy (even more fragile at this time with the Pertamina collapse) a protracted military campaign would be expensive both in terms of the direct military cost and in its potential deterrent effect on foreign aid and investment. Finally, there was the wider impact which such an invasion would have upon Indonesia's standing in the world. The invasion would be a blatant event. There could be no disguising its Indonesian invention. While East Timor had received far less UN and other international attention during the period of Portuguese rule than had the African colonies, it was attracting attention in the mid-1970s as part of the post-April 1974 events. Non-governmental organizations and individuals concerned about human rights could be expected to publicize the invasion. The international attention would get worse if the East Timorese put up a spirited defence of their land. It could result in sanctions or other international action by the UN or individual governments.

However, the Government decided that the invasion should go ahead. By December 1975 it had become apparent that the pro-Indonesian APODETI was not gaining in popularity and so the people were unlikely to vote themselves into the status of an Indonesian province. Additionally, FRETILIN was doing comparatively well at running the country. Indonesia had to act quickly.

First, if FRETILIN continued to run the country smoothly and the so-called Republic received diplomatic recognition from other governments, then Indonesia would find it difficult to invade an independent nation since this would be a contravention of international law and one which would bring Indonesia into disrepute and threaten its foreign aid and investment. Indonesia could only act safely during a period of chaos, when it could claim that it was there to restore order since Portugal was unable or unwilling to do so. Late 1975 may have been the last time of chaos.

Second, a flourishing East Timor would have encouraged other parts of Indonesia to renew their campaigns for independence. West Timor perhaps could have tried for independence or even association with East Timor. West Irian certainly increased its operations.

Third, Indonesia was worried about who would be the eventual rulers of East Timor. Newly independent countries, irrespective of how well they commence their period of independence, often fall into disarray. While FRETILIN was not communist, there was a risk that the so-called Republic could become, in effect, another Cuba, with the Republic's rulers turning to the eastern European bloc or China for financial assistance. It is worth recalling that the new nation was one of the world's poorest and there is a limit to what any people can achieve on their own; even China has now recognized that a quick programme of technological development requires western assistance. East Timor may have gone to the west for help, but this would have been unlikely to bear fruit because the west also had an interest in maintaining a strong and stable Indonesia, and a flourishing East Timor would have undermined that goal. The only alternative would have been the communist nations.

Fourth, there is this allegation:

> I believe that, beyond the efforts of the Indonesian Government to justify its invasion of East Timor 'to restore peace and order', the truth is that Indonesia has become some kind of policeman in South-East Asia. With the extraordinary victories of the heroic peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, the balance of power in that region has been radically changed and Indonesia has perforce become the stronghold of imperialism, which has now changed its conventional policy of direct intervention and adopted the strategy of war by proxy. East Timor is situated in a strategic area vital to the imperialist economic and nuclear strategy in the region.[70]

1975 was a bad year for the United States, with the ending of its Indochina policy and the fear that Indochina could become an aggressive communist bloc. It is the type of coincidence that conspiracy theory devotees so enjoy, that President Ford and Dr Kissinger were in Jakarta only days before Indonesia's invasion of East Timor.[71] This author does not wish to discuss[72] in this report the validity of such allegations. There is, however, the more general implication for the protection of human rights, that their protection is often subservient to larger political matters and their fate is decided by matters other than the merits of their own case.

An example of this conclusion is Australia. The fate of East Timor has created more domestic political upheavals within Australia including with members of the Government's own party, than most other foreign issues have done this decade. The support for East Timor's independence has been motivated by, among other things, the usual caution in all matters concerning Indonesian expansionist activities, a desire to stand up for the underdog, a desire to see the process of decolonization carried through completely and not stopped at East Timor's becoming another colony, and memories of the help received by Australian troops from the Timorese people (of whom 40,000 were killed) fighting the Japanese in World War II.[73] Also, about 200,000 Timorese are Catholics and some Australians, who would not normally be involved in this type of issue are involved because of the persecution of their Catholic brethren.

In late 1974 it was evident that the Whitlam Government was on the verge of a crisis over East Timor but preferred to do nothing.[74] During 1975 the Government did not do anything to deter an Indonesian invasion and may have encouraged one merely by not trying to stop it. The Opposition may have been more forthright in private by hinting to Indonesia that Australia (which it was soon to control) would not stop an invasion.[75] In late 1975, the Opposition engineered a political crisis which coincided with the invasion. It is clear that seeing Australia engulfed in this crisis, Indonesia decided to act. It is most unlikely that any Australian Government would have used force to stop Indonesia. But it could at least have used a very strong weapon: the threat to undermine Indonesia's international reputation as a stable nation, thereby threatening its foreign aid and investment. The Governor-General sacked the Whitlam Government and the Liberal-Country Party was back in power. This had complained about the methods used in waging the war, but has not questioned the takeover—even though some of its harshest critics have been its own backbenchers or state Liberal politicians.[76]

Australia's policy of not intervening to help East Timor has a number of motivations. First, it is troubled by the fear of invasion of this turbulent giant. It believes that the best way of handling Indonesia is to be friendly towards it. Second, it supports the idea of a strong and stable Indonesia and the absorption of East Timor was a price to pay for that idea. Third, like Indonesia, Australia was worried about East Timor becoming another 'Cuba', thereby providing the communist nations with a foothold only 200 miles north of Darwin. Finally, negotiations between Indonesia and Australia in the early 1970s on the division of the seabed between their nations, to facilitate oil exploration, left a gap in the area around East Timor (then still, of course, under Portuguese control). Australia wanted to conclude the negotiations and decided that this could best be achieved with Indonesia, rather than an independent East Timor.

The Australian abdication of responsibility for the protection of human rights in East Timor has had implications for aiding Indonesia's invasion. First, Australia is not without some influence in international affairs and it could have, for example, threatened to publicize at the UN and elsewhere the full story of Indonesia's invasion—with a view to deterring the invasion. Under the Whitlam Labor Government, Australia was for the first time making a determined effort to establish firm relations with the Third World. It thus had good contacts with both the western group of nations and the Third World. It chose not to use that leverage to stimulate a campaign for an independent East Timor.

On the contrary, Australia has used its influence to help Indonesia. On 28 November 1977 the UN General Assembly reaffirmed its earlier Resolutions on East Timor and rejected 'the claim that East Timor has been integrated' (Resolution 32/34). The voting was 67 to 26, with 47 abstentions (including Australia). On 20 January 1978 Australia accorded de facto recognition of 'East Timor as part of Indonesia'.[77] On 13 December 1978 the UN General Assembly reaffirmed its earlier decisions (Resolution 33/39). The voting was 59 to 31 with 44 abstentions. This time Australia voted against the Resolution. Few other countries have followed Australia's example over recognition.

Second, one of the main problems in discussing East Timor's recent history has been the lack of information of events in that area. The Australian Government's top-secret Defence Signals Directorate has monitored Indonesian army field radio traffic and so was as well informed of the combat as any Indonesian official not in the combat zone. It knew (as we now know[78]) as soon as the Indonesian headquarters, for example, that 'white men' (that is, five Australian journalists) were killed in Balibo in 1975. But the Whitlam and Fraser Governments have revealed none of this information. Moreover, both Governments have been anxious to cut FRETILIN's radio link with the outside world (based at Darwin in the Northern Territory). The East Timorese now have few alternative outlets for news; the main one being refugees.[79]

Indonesia's Impact

East Timor has incurred greater suffering from the Indonesian invasion than almost any other victim of an invasion this century. At least 10 per cent of the population has been killed. The situation was recently summed up as follows:

> The results of the invasion have been devastating: in Indonesian held areas, the population has been herded into camps where malnutrition is widespread and medical supplies scant. Entire villages have been eliminated, their contents looted and their crops destroyed. In the towns, large numbers are detained without trial under appalling conditions. In Dili, the capital, for example, prisoners are held in the food store of a former hotel; the store has neither windows nor a ventilation system. According to reports from various sources in East Timor – the Catholic Church, Indonesian Officials, refugee accounts, and Fretilin radio broadcasts – torture has been widely practised in areas under Indonesian control. The worst effects of the attempted annexation, however, have been experienced in Fretilin-held mountain interior now comprising some 30-40 per cent of the country. Unable to penetrate this area, and unsuccessful in its armed engagements with Fretilin troops, the Indonesian military has increasingly shifted its strategic emphasis to aerial and naval saturation bombing in an attempt to starve the population into surrender through destroying crops and villages.
>
> This policy was increasingly unsuccessful throughout 1978: an estimated 30-40,000 people have died as a result of the use of crop defoliants. Many more, perhaps 200,000 have entered Indonesian areas in the last two years in the hope of finding food and medical supplies. In most cases these hopes have not been fulfilled; an ambassador on a delegation visiting 'relief centres' in two villages in early September last year, commented that the people in the camps were 'in a desperate situation . . . they are starving in many cases; they are desperately ill; they need help in terms of immediate relief – food, clothing, basic medical care'. A Timorese official, according to an Australian ABC report, commented that the ambassadors had not seen the worst camps: 'At Suai things are much worse, and there are more people'. Despite these conditions, the Indonesian government has still not permitted the entry of the International Red Cross either into its own or Fretilin held areas.[80]

Indonesia's invasion has been marked by a degree of barbarity which many people outside the area find difficult to comprehend. Even 'senior Indonesian officials have been admitting privately for some time that certain army units got 'out of hand' at the start of the take-over of East Timor in December 1975'.[81] While individual allegations of torture or murder may be disputed, the overall pattern of the allegations adds up to a horrifying picture of Indonesian violence.

It is possible, given recent studies of other guerrilla conflicts and from what is known of the Indonesian Government's motivations, to explain the high level of violence. First, the East Timorese did not want Indonesian control over their lives. As the Vietnam conflicts (against Japan, France, United States and its allies) all showed, conventional armed forces fighting a highly motivated people on their own rugged or jungle terrain are very difficult (if not impossible) to beat.

Second, after two years of secret preparations, the Indonesian forces expected the December 1975 invasion to secure victory, by virtue of the surprise and extent of invading forces. Instead, they have become increasingly frustrated and embittered. As a consequence the violence has remained, if only because the Indonesian atrocities have not so much cowed the people as make them even more determined not to submit to Indonesian rule. Additionally, Indonesia's rampant corruption meant that materials destined for the armed forces have been siphoned off into private pockets.

Third, the Indonesian Government is waging a conflict against almost an entire people. Lacking sophisticated intelligence and a geographically confined area of military operations, the Government is obliged to use methods which cause indiscriminate suffering (such as destruction of arable land and crops) as a way of coercing people into submission.

East Timor and the Protection of Human Rights

East Timor's post-1974 history is one of the greatest tragedies of this century. At least 10 per cent of an entire population has been killed by an invasion. The conflict continues. Although the East Timorese people on current showing will not repel the invaders in the near future, they look like continuing the fight until the end. Given the success rate of recent cases of guerrilla warfare, eventual Indonesian victory is far from guaranteed.

The purpose of this final section is to look at the wider implications for the protection of human rights and for Indonesia posed by the East Timor invasion. Since this writer does not regard the East Timorese as an Indonesian 'minority', care is taken to stress that the section is concerned with human rights in general, rather than the rights of a minority population.

First, the invasion was facilitated by certain western governments. It is ironic that all the main ones (Australia, U.S., Britain and the Netherlands) pride themselves on their work for the protection of human rights. Their complicity damages their record.

Their duplicity may be seen in four ways. First, they have had an overriding concern both to prevent East Timor from becoming another 'Cuba' and to ensure good relations with Indonesia. As an American official has said:

> The US Government did not question the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia at the time (17 July 1976). This did not represent a legal judgment or endorsement of what took place. It was, simply, the judgment of those responsible for our policy in the area that the integration was an accomplished fact, that the realities of the situation would not be changed by our opposition to what had occurred, and that *such a policy would not serve our best interests in the light of the importance of our relations with Indonesia.*[82] (Emphasis added)

Those governments did little (if anything) to ensure the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions (384 of 22 December 1975 and 389 of 22 April 1976) which, inter alia, called for Indonesian withdrawal from East Timor. UN General Assembly Resolutions are not binding. But Security Council Resolutions are: 'The members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter' (UN Charter: Article 25).

These governments have supplied some of the military equipment used in the invasion.[83] They expressed disquiet about its use in East Timor. But the sales go on (such as the British Government's approval of the sale of eight BAC Hawk ground attack aircraft – which are particularly suitable for East Timor's combat conditions, with their capacity to fly low and drop napalm and defoliants).

Finally, these governments have financial ties with Indonesia. On the one hand, the ties provide potential leverage on the Indonesian Government, which they have preferred not to use. On the other hand, the protracted East Timor conflict, by tying down Indonesian forces and possibly stimulating parts of Indonesia into rebellion, jeopardizes that investment. Except for the arms manufacturers, these countries would be better off using their financial influence to stop the invasion – rather than risking the damage to their investments and loans.

Second, the UN was seized with the crisis almost as soon as the troops landed on East Timor. It had long been involved with East Timor as an area for decolonization. But the invasion brought a fresh air of crisis and tragedy. The UN General Assembly's first Resolution (3485 [XXX]) was adopted five days after the invasion commenced; the Security Council's fifteen days. Both the invasion itself and the methods of armed conflict have been contrary to international law.[84]

And yet the UN's involvement has been lacklustre. Despite the large majorities supporting the UN Resolutions, the implementation has not matched the voting. The attitude of some western governments was discussed above. As to the rest of the world, it would seem (with the exception of Portugal's former African colonies) that no major political bloc has been willing to insist that the UN do more than have some negotiations (which go nowhere) with the main protagonists. Indonesia enjoys a reflected glory (hardly still deserved) among Third World nations for its early work in creating (under Sukarno) the Third World voting bloc. They apparently cannot bring themselves to urge against Indonesia the same sort of sanctions they advocate against Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and South Africa. Additionally, they often have problems with minorities (some of whom they acquired by invasion, notably India – Goa). There is a general reluctance to air minority problems at the UN.

Third, the foreign mass media have played a disgraceful role in reporting (or non-reporting or misreporting) the East Timor invasion. There are certain exceptions, such as some small circulation left-wing newspapers and the small circulation conservative newspapers in Australia: *Age* (Melbourne), *Sydney Morning Herald* and *National Times* (Sydney). In a Statement to a UN Committee, Noam Chomsky was particularly scathing in his criticism of the foreign mass media, especially when compared with their far greater coverage of the Cambodian situation.[85] The western-owned mass media (which dominate the mass media of many other countries) have been too willing to accept the point of view of western governments. Their appetite for investigative journalism (as illustrated during the Watergate scandal) has not extended to East Timor. Their appetite for 'human interest' stories of tragedy and suffering (as illustrated over the Indochinese boat people) has not extended to East Timor.

Fourth, who *is* helping the East Timorese? With the Indonesians still killing them, and with western governments, the UN generally and most foreign mass media barely concerned about their fate, they have (with the exception of Portugal's former African colonies) only some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on their side, for example, the Australian Campaign for an Independent East Timor and its equivalent organizations overseas, and the New York-based International League for Human Rights. There are also some individuals acting in their own capacity, such as Australian public servant (once based in Dili) J.S. Dunn.[86] There have also been books and articles written about East Timor by both activists and academics.[87] East Timor's fate has not, therefore, gone unnoticed – despite the obstacles with which NGOs and individuals have had to cope. It is a sad reflection of the international community's concern about the protection of human rights (which is making progress elsewhere) that 10 per cent of a country's population can be wiped out and the only support which the victims receive is from NGOs and concerned individuals, because governments believe that opposition to the invasion 'would not serve our best interests in the light of the importance of our relations with Indonesia'. Needless to say the East Timor situation emphasises the importance of NGOs and individuals in the international protection of human rights.

Finally, there is the Indonesian Government. Its troops face a protracted struggle, which may not be victorious. Resources which its people need for their own development, are being squandered on this invasion. Even if the Government does eventually gain control over all of East Timor, its problems will not be over. After centuries of colonial exploitation, the country's land is damaged. The Indonesian method of conflict has contributed to that damage. The country was already one of the world's poorest in 1975; its condition now is even worse. It remains to be seen how the Government will be able to finance East Timor's recovery – if at all.

On the other hand, if the Government were to withdraw its forces today, it would have left a wound on East Timor which will take decades to heal. Its population has been decimated, most of its leaders are dead, its land ruined and its infrastructure (almost non-existent to start with) largely destroyed. Of all of Indonesia's violations of human rights, the invasion of East Timor is the worst. Whilst it is important that international pressure be maintained upon the Government to release its political prisoners, there is also a need to campaign for an independent East Timor.

The East Timorese are members of that select group of peoples found around the world: ones who are truly self-reliant. Given the lack of international assistance from most governments and the UN, they have only NGOs, concerned individuals and the former Portuguese African colonies, to provide political assistance. At home, they are on their own. Their survival as a people depends upon their own efforts and their ability to withstand Indonesian terror.

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[56] 'Aussie Pilots Risk Shootup', *Nation Review,* 4 August 1977; 'Fraser Defends Mapping Operation in Irian Jaya', *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 30 August 1977.

[57] 'Jakarta Abandond Policy to Wipe Out Rebels', *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 12 December 1978; 'Casting Out the Fears of a Decade', *Sydney Morning Herald,* 15 December 1978; 'Indonesia Strives for a New Policy Image Over Irian Jaya', *National Times,* 16 December 1978.

[58] The PNG Government, after being unable to find an Asian or Pacific government willing to accept the OPM leader, agreed to his transfer to Sweden in March 1979.

[59] 'Border Agreement Near – Communique', *PNG Newsletter* (Konedobu), 8 June 1979.

[60] Press releases from the so-called Republic of West Papua New Guinea, London Information Office (105 Calabria Road, London N5 IHS) indicate that the struggle will continue.

[61] Supra note 42, pp. 44-62.

[62] Brunei, a Sultanate of 22,226 square miles of 190,000 people is still ruled from London, though with some local self-rule, and is expected to become independent in the early 1980s. It is also adjacent to Malaysian territory (Sarawak) and, for as long as its oil reserves last, will be a tempting target (after independence) to both Indonesia and Malaysia. For information on its slow progress towards independence see Michael Leifer, 'Decolonization and International Status: The Experience of Brunei', *International Affairs* (London), April 1978, pp. 240-52.

[63] William Minter, *Portuguese Africa and the West,* Penguin, London, 1972, pp. 15-16.

[64] For example: the British Campaign for an Independent East Timor, at 21 Solon Road, London SW2.

[65] An alternative (pro-Indonesian) point of view is contained in: H.W. Arndt, 'Timor: Expediency or Principle?', *Quadrant* (Sydney), May 1976, pp. 17-19.

[66] Margaret King, *Eden to Paradise,* Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1963, pp. 176-77.

[67] Jill Jolliffe, *East Timor: Nationalism and Colonialism,* University of Queensland Press, 1978, p. 17.

[68] The East Timor conflict has generated (especially because of ET's overseas supporters) conflicting accounts about the war and its origins. An impartial account is: UN Department of Political Affairs, *Decolonization: East Timor,* New York, August 1976.

[69] Helen Hill, *The Timor Story,* Timor Information Service, Melbourne (no date), p. 17.

[70] Jose Ramos Horta (Minister for External Relations of the so-called DRET) at UN Decolonization Committee, 8 September 1976, UN Document: A/AC.109/PV. 1052, p. 18.

[71] See: Denis Freney, *The East Timor People's Struggle for National Liberation – Resistance, Revolution and Liberation,* Campaign for an Independent East Timor, Sydney, January 1979, p. 2.

[72] Attention is drawn, however, to footnote 34 above, where it is pointed out that when the US had to choose either Indonesia or Australia to support, it chose Indonesia, thereby indicating the priority it accorded Indonesia over its more traditional ally.

[73] Among the most important critics of the Government's policy are: Liberal backbench MP Michael Hodgman, Labor MPs Tom Uren and Ken Fry; most Churches have (to varying extents) criticized the invasion (including the more conservative ones, like the Church of England in Australia, at its September 1977 synod); and the Australian Journalists Association (five of whose members died in mysterious circumstances in East Timor but about which the Government has done little).

[74] Michael Richardson, 'East Timor: the War Australia Might Have Prevented', *National Times,* 19 July 1976. In April 1977, the then Indonesian Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, said that Mr Whitlam was told in advance that Indonesia planned to invade East Timor. Mr Whitlam denied that he had been informed. See: 'Whitlam 'Knew of Timor Raid in Advance'', *The Australian,* 22 April 1977; 'Timor Denial by Whitlam', *Sydney Morning Herald,* 27 April 1977. Despite the denials, it is likely that the Labor Government did know.

[75] The then Opposition Foreign Affairs Spokesman, Andrew Peacock, met two Indonesian officials in Bali in September 1975 and, inter alia, said that the Liberal Party would not protest if Indonesia was forced to 'do something' about East Timor and he outlined a scenario for the sacking of the Whitlam Government (which occurred as he outlined, some six weeks later); see: Paul Kelly, 'Intelligence Leak Against Minister', *National Times,* 2 May 1977. (Mr Peacock is the present Foreign Minister). Also see: Peter Hastings,

'Indonesian Impatience mounts over Timor', *Sydney Morning Herald,* 12 May 1977.

[76] Particular mention should be made of the conservative NSW State Liberal MP John Dowd, who has encouraged the Australian Section (of which he is president) of the International Commission of Jurists, to take a firm stand in criticising the Government. See: John Dowd, 'East Timor Issue', *Justice* (ICJ, Australian Section), November 1978, pp. 57-68.

[77] Keith D. Suter, 'International Law and East Timor', *Dyason House Papers* (Melbourne), December 1978, pp. 5-8.

[78] Hamish McDonald, 'Death at Balibo', *National Times,* 7 July 1979.

[79] Jill Jolliffe, 'Timor: Resistance Down But Not Out', *Nation Review,* 24 May 1979.

[80] John Taylor, 'West Aids Indonesian Genocide', *New Statesman* (London), 4 May 1979.

[81] 'Some Indonesian Units 'Out of Hand'', *Sydney Morning Herald,* 28 January 1977.

[82] George H. Aldrich, 'Statement Made Before the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the House Committee on International Relations', 19 July 1977, *Department of State Bulletin* (Washington DC), 12 December 1977, p. 326.

[83] Ibid., p. 325

[84] Supra note 77, pp. 1-2.

[85] Noam Chomsky, *Statement delivered to the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly,* November 1978 (mimeo). Partly reprinted in: 'East Timor: the Press Cover-Up'. *Inquiry* (Philadelphia), 19 February 1979, pp. 9-15.

[86] J.S. Dunn, *The East Timor Situation: Report on Talks with Timorese Refugees in Portugal,* 11 February 1977 (mimeo). (Mr Dunn works at the Legislative Research Service, Parliament House, Canberra ACT, 2600).

[87] Other than the literature already mentioned, see: Catholic Institute of International Relations, *East Timor,* London, May 1977; Embassy of Indonesia, *The Question of Portuguese Timor,* Canberra (no date); Europe-Third World Research Centre, *The Struggle for East Timor,* London, January 1976; Richard W. Franke, *East Timor: The Hidden War,* South-East Asia Resource Center, Berkeley, 1976; Helen Hill, 'Australia and Portuguese Timor' in Roger Scott and Jim Richardson (eds.), *The First Thousand Days of Labor,* Australian Political Studies Association, 1975, pp. 336-56; Peter Hastings, 'The Timor Problem', *Australian Outlook,* April 1975, pp. 18-33, August 1975, pp. 180-96, December 1975, pp. 323-34; Indonesian Government, *The Process of Decolonization in East Timor,* Jakarta, August 1976; Bill Nicol, *Timor: the Stillborn Nation,* Visa, Melbourne, 1978; South-East Asia Resource Center, *Indonesian Intervention in East Timor,* Berkeley, 1977; Nancy Viviani, 'Australians and the Timor Issue', *Australian Outlook,* December 1978, pp. 241-61.

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